

Don't THE *Story*
UNFORTUNATE UNION:

OR, THE
TEST OF VIRTUE.
A
STORY founded on FACTS,
AND
Calculated to promote the Cause of VIRTUE
in Younger Minds.

Written by a L A D Y.

V O L. II.

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THE
UNFORTUNATE UNION:
OR, THE
TEST OF VIRTUE.

LETTER XLV.

Sir JAMES HAZZELDINE to Mr.
MELMOTH.

YES, Jack, I am able to travel
now; for I am going for Derby
to-morrow. I have a tale for
your tale; a tale that will beat fifty such
as your's. But let me begin in order:

VOL. II.

B

You

You mentioned seeing Nancy Spencer at the play: she was come to town with the old Knight on an extraordinary occasion, which you shall hear in its course. Last week I was trying (the season being so fine) whether I could walk to the keeper's house, preparative to my journey to town. I saw a post-chaise and four strike out of the London road across the park. I stalked back as fast as I could, supposing it to contain some one of our old companions: but I was greatly surprised to see a lady in deep mourning, her bonnet over her face, who desired to speak with me. I offered the lady (a fine, graceful woman!) my hand, but did not see her face till we entered the parlour; when who should present herself but — Isabella! I surveyed her round and round — “What occasions this alteration? Are you in mourning for the loss of Melmoth?” “Hang Melmoth! (said the brazen-face) my dress is to answer a much better purpose:”

“ purpose: let us have tea, and I’ll tell
 “ you”——And she began thus: “ You
 “ may have heard that Sir Charles Bar-
 “ ham had a sister who married the clerk
 “ of a Spanish merchant, and thereby
 “ disobliged her friends, who value them-
 “ selves (foolish distinction in a commer-
 “ cial country!) that not one of their
 “ family was ever contaminated with
 “ trade. Well, this lady (whose name
 “ by marriage became Del Rio) having
 “ in vain solicited reconciliation from her
 “ haughty family, she not being of age,
 “ received of an honest Jew two thousand
 “ (instead of four) for her fortune, and
 “ embarked with her husband for the
 “ Spanish West-Indies, where he acquired
 “ a prodigious fortune. His wife, and a
 “ son he had by her, died; and there was
 “ only a daughter left, called Susannah
 “ after her mother; and this daughter is
 “ sole heiress to his vast possessions. She
 “ was sent home with a lady of rank

“ who was returning to Europe, and was
 “ placed under the care of an eminent
 “ banker in Paris; her father thinking
 “ the severity of the Spanish manners
 “ too great, and wishing the Spanish re-
 “ serve to be softened by a polite French
 “ education. He did not choose England,
 “ lest she should be perverted, or con-
 “ verted, or whatever he pleased to term
 “ it. Well, the round of days and years
 “ went on—Mr. Del Rio chose to end
 “ his days in Europe. He loved his
 “ wife, and wished to see some of her
 “ family, although they had treated him
 “ with such disdain. This man (a much
 “ better Papist, than Sir Charles and his
 “ sister Lady Cofway are Protestants) sent
 “ his compliments to Sir Charles and the
 “ aforesaid Lady, to acquaint them with
 “ his arrival in England. He was re-
 “ ceived with raptures—Oh! the power
 “ of riches! No wonder you and I, Sir
 “ James, (the hussy put herself on a
 “ footing

“ footing with me;—it hurt my pride)
 “ should take all means to gain them.—
 “ No objections now against his religion;
 “ which was the principal one urged
 “ against Miss Sufannah when she mar-
 “ ried him. Well, they met, and were
 “ brother and sister, and so forth; and
 “ all went with great parade to visit their
 “ niece at the convent where she was
 “ placed. This young lady, by agree-
 “ ment of the fathers, was to be united
 “ to the young Marquis de R——. But
 “ good Mr. Del Rio paid the debt to
 “ nature a few weeks past, and left Sir
 “ Charles and an eminent Spanish mer-
 “ chant guardians to this young lady;
 “ and those pious persons determined to
 “ circumvent this Marquis, and marry
 “ her to their own cub young Sir Mar-
 “ maduke Cosway, as soon as he can
 “ come from Eton school, and be licked
 “ into form; and thereby to preserve the
 “ vast fortune and title in their own
 “ family.

“ What opinion can you or I have
 “ of religion, when the professors of it
 “ (Lady Cofway is one) can disobey its
 “ dictates? I remember my mother told
 “ me, when I was a good girl and read
 “ my Bible, that we should be cunning
 “ as serpents and harmless as doves; and
 “ that our conversation should be meek
 “ and lowly, and, according to the cate-
 “ chism, we should neither covet nor
 “ desire other men’s goods: but I believe
 “ it is all a jest, or the first people in the
 “ nation, Bishops and all, would not
 “ prefer worldly grandeur and riches to
 “ those precepts.—For instance; Sir
 “ Charles Barham, - although he could
 “ pretend to be angry with his sister for
 “ marrying a professed member of the
 “ church of Rome, yet at the same time
 “ kept a mistress, and broke his Lady’s
 “ heart; and by his fondness for Nancy
 “ Spencer, although a good girl in her
 “ way, did the same by his son, who, as
 “ you

" you know, died a twelve-month since.
 " Now what can be thought of this con-
 " duct? Would not the most abandoned
 " of us all start at the thought of rob-
 " bing another man of his right on whom
 " we had no claim, or the impiety of not
 " fulfilling the will of the dead, had not
 " those gospel professors taught us the
 " way?

" But as, without faith, I act only (as
 " Square says) according to the rule of
 " right, I think it more meritorious to
 " bestow Miss Del Rio on you, than on
 " Marmaduke Cosway, as he can by no
 " means deserve her. He is a mere
 " prince of coxcombs. You have gene-
 " rosity in your nature, and will allow
 " her in conjunction with yourself to
 " spend her money. But sign, and seal
 " too, what you will bestow on me and
 " Nancy, who sent for me post on the
 " occasion, and your business shall be
 " done."

I promised her, and bound myself with the strongest asseverations; for you know I cannot succeed without their (Nancy and Bell's) help: nay, I gave her a bond, as I had stamps in the house, which my worship's clerk filled up, and will be executed in proper time.—Sir Charles, at the time you saw Nancy at the play, came to town to receive his niece. Lady Cosway was gone to Paris to conduct her to Dover, from whence she was to proceed to Derbyshire. (But Nancy was to have a taste of the town by the way, and return *incog.*)

Now the scheme concerted between Nancy and Isabella is this:—Isabella has already taken a house in Derby, passing for a widow with one child, (a beautiful female one she has) her name Conway;—did not choose to reside in or near the metropolis, as it reminded her of her deceased husband;—has already consulted

Sir

Sir Charles about purchasing a little estate in the neighbourhood. She was introduced as a lady of character, and a tolerable fortune, by Sir Thomas Webley. Lord Belgrave, who was on a visit to the Duke of D——, and who had formerly seen her in Italy in an advantageous light, again saw her at church, and bowed to her; and conversed with her for some time as they came out of church. This raised her in the opinion of the neighbouring gentry. But the best joke of all is, that whenever Mrs. Conway chooses to consult Sir Charles on any business at A—— Park, Nancy is obliged to quit the apartments to make way for this paragon of virtue. You cannot think how artfully those jades conduct this matter; they are perfect Machiavels.— She set out the next day on her return; and I purpose going to morrow. You must meet me at N——. Bring your trusty Swiss with you, as I must borrow

B 5

him

him for some weeks. Tom I can trust; but I ought to have another, considering the business I am upon. Will one of your fellows do? if not, borrow Ashford's Ned, clothe him and bring him; and then there will be three—a tolerable retinue for a travelling Baronet. Remember, I was very intimate with the late Captain Cofway, and am a kind of trustee for the widow and child. Do not fail meeting me at N——, as you value the favour or resentment of

JAMES HAZZELDINE.

LETTER

L E T T E R XLVI.

From the Same to the Same.

I HAVE succeeded beyond my most sanguine wishes. I was received at Derby by that Ephesian Matron, Mrs. Conway, with much joy—But no Nancy; she must not appear in such company. She went thro' the town in Sir Charles's chariot: I asked, before a Lady of the town (a morning visitant) and the servant who was attending with chocolate, what pretty lady that was? I was answered, with much disdain, "A kept woman of Sir Charles Barham's;"—and then the outrageously virtuous Mrs. Conway wondered how such creatures dared to appear in public. In short, no one can top the part better. I ought first to premise, on Sir Thomas Webley's ac-

B. 6.

count,

count, Lady Cofway (whose seat is three miles distant from the town) made a visit to Mrs. Conway, and invited her to a private ball at her house. They curt'sey at church, join the same set at the card assembly, and have a most fashionable intimacy. I must own, I was afraid that Lord Belgrave would have been present at the monthly assembly; but his visit was only *en passant*. I was introduced by one of the Members of the county, and complimented with opening the ball, which I did with Lady Cofway: her Ladyship declining a second minuet, I took out her niece, a mild, modest-looking young lady, rather too much of a brunette (owing to the climate in which she was born) to be deemed handsome in England; but, taking her all together, she is very agreeable. It is lucky for me that I can speak Spanish so fluently, (that benefit I received from my cousin Waller) as Lady Cofway is so very watchful over her,

her, and speaking so universal a language as French would be nearly the same as speaking English to her. I went down two country-dances with her; but, fearful of making too free with my leg, and Miss Del Rio, (who, as it may be supposed, was no adept in English country-dances) we sat down, Lady Cosway with us! I took great pains to remember (having long neglected geography) the situation of the city where she was born. You cannot think how delighted she was she had met with one that could speak her native language, and describe her country. In all this discourse I did not make one compliment to her person: no, I must insinuate myself by degrees. I praised Lady Cosway for taking her under her care; as it would be a dreadful thing, I said, for such a young lady to be left in this dangerous world without a female relation to guide her steps. I then hinted that Sir Charles had put it out of his
power

power to receive her. She seemed quite pleased, and launched out on her brother's imprudence. In short, I so conducted myself, that I dare say I shall be a favourite with the old lady—I wish I may with the young one. I shall certainly gain my point, could I make myself master of her *heart*; her person would follow of course; and away we would take a jaunt to the land of matrimony. Every thing has concurred to favour my design; the season of the year; that most of the people of fashion are in town; no smart officers to attract the eye (as is generally the case in a country town)—I being consequently (without vanity) the cleverest fellow here at present, and the first who has conversed much with her, as she speaks such very imperfect English; then appearing as a trustee to a widow and an orphan—all these things make me a respectable character. Mrs. Conway gave them an invitation to a little concert.

cert at her house, to be conducted by the aforesaid Mr. C——, Member for the county, myself, the widow, and a young lady of the town. You know I play well on the violoncello: Mrs. Conway (no more plain Isabella) was admirable on the harpsichord: Mr. M—— played the violin; and the young lady and Mrs. Conway sung by turns. Our guests were highly delighted. We are to spend this day at Cosway Hall. Her Ladyship begs, as I speak Spanish so well, I would endeavour to teach Miss Del Rio English, as I can explain the meaning of the words better to her than one who does not understand her native language—an agreeable task to me. I will endeavour to teach her another lesson—Eloisa and Abelard—Hey! Jack—A fine story for a novel this will be—love elopements all the ingredients requisite.—I am preparing for my visit to Cosway Hall. The chariot is to be sent for Mrs.

Conway

Conway and Miss; for Mrs. Conway is so prudent, she never leaves her child to the care of servants. I go in my chaise, with all my attendants, in honour to the ladies: Tom and Ned carry their French-horns. We had a note from Nancy, brought by Tom, who is making love to the house-maid at A—— Park. She says, things go on as we could wish; that both the widow and myself are great favourites with all parties. The old Knight tells her every thing, and laments that she cannot be present at any amusements; but says he will make her amends: he has given her a fifty-pound bank-note by way of douceur; and Nancy comforts herself with the thought that, if we succeed, she shall soon be independent of them all. She says, she is ready to burst to see the airs which Bell gives herself at church, and what an humble distance she (Nancy) is obliged to keep: nay, for that matter, it is as much as Tom can do to keep

keep his countenance. But I have promised them a handsome present, and a place each in some of the public offices, if they are diligent and faithful. Do you hold yourself in readiness, lest we should be surprised. Scrape together all the money you can, no matter on what terms: if we succeed, we can well afford to pay any premium or interest that is required; if we do not, why, they who advance must lose their money, that is all; we shall be the worst off. You must not, I think, let Lady Charles into the secret; two women are enough in all conscience.

— But the chariot is come, and I must go down to hand this flower of widowhood into it, with her darling child.— Oh! Jack, what a farce! What a bustle does an equipage and half a dozen servants make in a country town! What a crowd is gathered to see the quality! as they term the widow and

Your humble servant,

J. HAZZELDINE.

L E T T E R XLVII.

Lady LUCY TEMPLE to Mrs. MELMOTH.

YOU will wonder, my dearest Harriet, at hearing from me so soon again: but Mr. Pleshoff is going off with a secret commission—reasons of state unknown to us females—he undertakes to bring this to you. I told him, by way of reward, he should see the loveliest English woman that ever graced our unsettled climate. But allow me, my dearest creature, to express my concern on your dejection of spirits; let me beseech you not to give way to it. Lord Eastmain, I trust, will soon be with you; and he will see justice done you, I make no doubt, both as to what concerns your person and fortune: and many happy days may you yet see, and much good may you still do,

do, if you will not give way to grief. Lord Mulcester's last letter almost broke my heart. Why do you not speak out? why do you not complain? I should then have hopes of you. But this silent sorrow—Oh! how I execrate Melmoth and that preposterous wretch my sister-in-law! I wish Melmoth had been fettered to her, or any one, so she had not come into our family with her riches. I foresaw the event, you know. My father and mother are almost besides themselves; they have written to her aunt, Lady Harman, (whom, by the way, I like no better than I do her niece) and Charles: I have also written in very severe terms.—Poor Lord Belgrave, amiable, worthy youth! I wish he would take a trip to the continent; for I am afraid (all innocent as you are) of that vile tongue of Anne Temple—Need I say more to one of your penetration and delicacy?

Her

Her Ladyship kindly offered, if my presence could be of any service to you, that, as soon as the communication is open, I should come to you: if you desire it, my love, and I can be of real use, I will, though I do not care to trust myself near Lord B. I am afraid of my treacherous heart; and since your dæmon's behaviour, I am more afraid of him than ever. Lady S—— began a correspondence with me—a good woman she is—but it is all in behalf of her brother. I find myself too much inclined to take his part—But not one word or hint of this: I will hardly give myself leave to think so sometimes.—But again my heart recoils at a libertine. Melmoth is even more insensible than a savage; for turn my Harriet on shore amidst the Hottentots at the Cape of Good Hope, I think they would adore her virtues, and be tamed by her example. I could almost wish (do not be angry with me, Harriet)

since

since Mr. Villars was to die so soon, that it had happened a year and a half ago, and then this horrid marriage had been prevented.

But I will here drop the subject, and inform you I have got a lover in this part of the globe; a man of great consequence, I'll assure you; a Lord with a monstrous hard name. But the best of all is, I have half a dozen rivals. Oh! how they swell and pout for vexation, that an English woman should steal away their dearee's heart! How I do plague them sometimes, when I want to drive my dear native England, and my dearer Harriet, out of my mind!

I have been meditating on one of Rochefoucault's maxims. He says, "In the
"adversity of our best friends we find
"something to give ourselves pleasure."
I must say, with the Dean,

"As

“ As Rochefoucault his maxims drew
 “ From nature, I believe them true.”

I am afraid that I sometimes verify it; for, since the account George has given of Mr. Melmoth's behaviour, my father and mother have forborne even to try to influence me in any one's favour, or I do not doubt but this northern nobleman would have been as strongly recommended as Lord B. was. But mum is the word now; honour and riches no longer a subject with us.—But Mr. Pleshoff is waiting. I write to Lady S—— and Lord Mulcester by this conveyance; and believe me, my dearest, my best-beloved, in all change of times or climates,

Your unalterably affectionate

LUCY TEMPLE.

Lord Mulcester's last packet is just now brought. I rejoice at his telling me that
 he

he has hopes of Mr. Melmoth's reformation: if George hopes, there must be grounds. Dearly shall I love him for his goodness to my Harriet. Adieu, my dear! I am delighted with the word *Hope*.

LETTER XLVIII.

Sir JAMES HAZZELDINE to Mr.
MELMOTH.

THINGS are in great forwardness, Jack! The booby son is here, and has got himself into a scrape with an officer of marines, who is on a visit in the neighbourhood. They happened to join company on a shooting party, and afterwards, at the tavern in the village, entered into a discourse on politics; and our hopeful heir, alike ignorant and impudent,

pudent, was very impertinent. The young officer made him a morning visit, not choosing to trust a challenge by a servant, and invited him to meet him the next day in a wood near the house. Poor Cosway, frightened out of his shallow senses, told his mother: she applied to me, and proposed going to Sir Charles, and binding them over. I told her that would make too much noise, and I would undertake to settle the affair, or take up the challenge myself. She sincerely thanked me, and blessed me. (So, you see, it would be no matter if I was shot through the head, if master was safe.) So I waited on this martial man; a young lad of mettle indeed! I told him, Sir Marmaduke was not much skilled in the weapons of offence. "I believe so, (said he) but he should not affront a gentleman without being able to give a gentleman-like satisfaction." And he violently swore to it, if he did not meet him,

him, he would cane him in the face of the whole town. With much persuasion, and promise of safety, I prevailed on mamma to permit her darling, under my protection, to go to the wood. Accordingly we went; and a woeful figure the Baronet made, his face as pale as a cambrick handkerchief. The son of Mars was punctual to his time. Pistols were produced: I interfered, and begged, if possible, the matter might be compromised. He asked me, what sort of satisfaction I, as a gentleman, thought he deserved? I was obliged to own I thought Sir Marmaduke ought to beg his pardon. This was complied with; the pistols fired in the air; they shook hands; and back we went to Cosway Hall to dinner, all in high good-humour. The Lieutenant is treated with great respect, and I am perfectly adored. The booby Baronet will not stir without me; and I have obtained the following piece of intelligence, that,

you will own, equals Pitt's diamond:
 for I am in all his secrets. But I will give
 it you in his own words — “ Sir James,
 “ (said he) do you know our folks want
 “ me to marry this Spanish cousin of
 “ mine? but I do not like her, for more
 “ reasons than one. She is a *Papist*, you
 “ know; and besides, to tell you the
 “ truth, I am engaged to Miss Polly
 “ Harris of D——; a girl a thousand
 “ times prettier than Miss Del Rio. And
 “ what signifies money? as Mrs. Harris
 “ says; it will not make people happy.
 “ The young Duke of B—— is very
 “ fond of Polly, and I believe would
 “ have her; but she prefers me to him,
 “ and her mother says there is not a Duke
 “ in England shall make her daughter
 “ break her word. She says, at present
 “ we are both too young, and she hopes
 “ my mother in time will consent to it;
 “ for, if I were a Duke, she would not
 “ be married to me without my mother's
 “ consent;

“ consent; but that Miss Polly and I
 “ shall not mind when I am of age.
 “ Now I want to go to see her; but
 “ I owe so much money at D——, that
 “ I do not know how I shall shew my
 “ face there, unless you will advance me
 “ a little ready cash.” Without hesitation
 I gave him a thirty-pound note, and an
 order on you to make it a hundred. You
 must treat him magnificently; take him
 to Charles Temple’s, where there is always
 a brilliant circle, to the Pantheon, and
 places of public diversion; and be sure,
 wherever you go, to set me in a respect-
 able light. Now I suppose you will con-
 jecture, as I do, that this Mrs. Harris
 (Polly’s mother) is an artful woman, who
 has superadded an uncommon knowledge
 of the world, and that particular kind of
 keen observation, which is so peculiar to
 those who in this great city are obliged to
 support a genteel appearance on a small
 income. As far as I can understand from

the young man's simple account, though he suspects it not, this is the case. Her husband was formerly something belonging to the Treasury; and she lives now on a small annuity, with two daughters, shewy girls, dressed out on purpose to attract the Eton boys. Something may be made of this. He was in great perplexity to know which way he should form an excuse to get away. I asked him who was his most intimate acquaintance at school? He named several; but the Honourable Mr. T—— was the chief. I wrote a letter for the Honourable Mr. T—— (Was it not very kind in me to save him the trouble? He had shewn me one of his letters, which I kept by mistake) to invite him to town. It came by the post—No deception could appear in that, you know. The Lady mother is pleased at the honour done him; and he sets out on Wednesday.—Something, as I said before, must be done with
Mrs.

Mrs. Harris. Do you take a morning ride, and found her at a distance. Get off the letter as well as you can, as you may be assured T—— will stare when informed of it. You may tell them such things are often done, and very likely a lady may be at the bottom of it; and, as he will be pleased with the effects, he will not inquire much into the truth of it.

I am happy to think Miss Del Rio approves of my behaviour in the duel affair. She thanked me in very polite terms for the part I took in it, as her cousin was so young a man. She laid a strong emphasis on the word *cousin*; as much as to say, I am concerned *only as a cousin*. I really begin to see in her a growing esteem for me. Were she a flighty girl, I, or any one else, might have a chance; but those grave, sentimental ones “fixing, fix, and then con-

" fide till death." Of this I am sure, she cannot like the Baronet, their manners are so widely different. You see, I have a fair field open before me. Once more I charge you, remember to humour this capricious boy, and dazzle his small share of understanding with glare and glitter. — Adieu! You shall hear soon again from

Your's,

J. HAZZELDINE,

Send something for the palate by the coach by way of present; for dearly does our stately dame love good fare.

LETTER

LETTER XLIX.

Lord MULCESTER to Lady L. TEMPLE.

I AM sorry, my dearest Lucy, that I have no comfort to give you on your unhappy, amiable friend's account. What Mrs. Varenny wrote you of Melmoth is too true. I would, if possible, have concealed that, and some other disagreeable circumstances, from you: but by some means you will hear it; therefore it may better come from me. Poor Harriet! she is confined to her room: she pleads illness; but I am sure it is from some brutal treatment of that abandoned wretch. Jenny told me, in confidence, the marks of violence are visible. Belgrave guesses the matter—But I shall come to it in course. On Monday was se'nnight there was a private party at Mr. Melmoth's:

Lady Harman and her niece were there; for Mrs. Melmoth (from regard to our family) behaves to them as politely as she can, considering how much she must dislike their conduct on all occasions. I should have first told you, that I dined there by invitation, no one being present but Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth. After Harriet withdrew, he had the assurance—shall I call it? it is too soft a name—to ask me for more money. My looks spoke my astonishment, as he must suppose I could not be ignorant of what had become of the other, as Mrs. Varenny's letter informed you. I told him, I really could not advance any more, except Lord Eastmain joined in the security. This effectually silenced him. I took my hat, and was going; but he begged my pardon, although with a stifled resentment, as I could plainly perceive; and intreated me not to go, as his wife would suspect something if I did. I would not quarrel
with

with him for that excellent sufferer's sake; therefore sat down again. He then said he wished he had made a better use of what I advanced before, and intimated something of being taken in, and of sharpers and gamesters. "Mr. Melmoth taken in! (I said) You, Sir, are no novice in the ways of the town."— Lord Belgrave and some other company coming in, prevented farther conversation. But now I must clear up another point to you: At the time when I reconciled this brute to his wife, I advanced Mrs. Melmoth a thousand pounds to pay tradesmen and servants' wages; five hundred of which he found means to get from her the next day, whereby the honest intent with which it was lent was frustrated. This, together with five hundred more borrowed on the most exorbitant terms, was lost at Stapleton's in a few hours. Poor Harriet, in the utmost perplexity, applied to Peregrine for relief; he told

me: and from what little she said to him, and from what I learned from others, I came by my intelligence; not one particle from Mrs. Melmoth: nor indeed would I give her so much pain, as to make her suppose I am acquainted with her ill-timed confidence in her worthless husband. Yet why do I blame her, on a judgment founded on the event only? Difficult situations occasion wonder at a person's conduct when the wonderers cannot account for that situation.——To proceed: The card party met; Lord Belgrave did not choose play, but leaned over Lady S——'s chair. Melmoth whispered his wife, who withdrew, and he followed her: when she returned, it was visible to me (the rest of the company were too much engaged with their play to mind her) that she was discomposed, and the traces of tears on her cheeks. Frederick, who watches every turn of her countenance, appeared to be
much

much affected. Our hopeful sister, who sat almost opposite, on observing him, burst into a loud laugh, like an unfeeling, hardened, insolent woman. Lord Belgrave, not hearing her ill-natured laugh, addressed Mrs. Melmoth, and begged, in the tenderest manner, to know whether she felt any returns of her lately recovered illness. I saw Melmoth look at them, who said, in a sarcastic manner, to Charles, "I'll be hanged if the sober Lord Belgrave is not making love to my wife; Nature will be Nature, you know, Charles; *Amor vincit omnia!*" This open attack, although meant as raillery, gave me great pain for both my friends. The sweet Harriet, with too much sensibility for her present weak frame, seeing all eyes fixed on her, although she could not tell for what reason, as she had not attended to what was said, was so much abashed that she was near fainting. Lady Charles, as she is called, again took oc-

cation to throw out some indelicate witticisms. I checked her severely. " I meant
 " nothing (said she) only a little harmless
 " raillery." " Raillery (returned I) no
 " longer deserves to be regarded as such,
 " when it transgresses the bounds of good
 " manners and decorum: besides, when
 " gross, it loses all that sharpness, by
 " which alone it is allied to wit; it is
 " then wounding clumsily with a hatchet,
 " instead of touching with the keen point
 " of a lancet." This stopped her career
 for that time; but she watched the first
 opportunity to make reprisals. When I
 could speak to Frederick without being
 observed, I told him of Mr. Melmoth's
 remark: it made him start, and look very
 serious. The infernal Lady Anne soon
 guessed the cause: " So, my Lord, (said
 " she) you have had a lecture as well as
 " myself; and here is a supplement to
 " it, a sermon come all the way from
 " V——." She then took out your
 letter:

letter: " Here (cried she) read it, my
 " Lord Belgrave, for the good of the
 " company." This was too much to be
 borne; for her air and manner were more
 insolent than her words. " Madam, (said
 " Charles to her) please to desire Lord
 " Belgrave to give me the letter, as it
 " reflects much more honour on the
 " writer, than on the person so justly
 " rebuked." " Mercy on me! (returned
 " she) are you turned preacher too?
 " What will this world come to!" " A
 " blazing star! (said Lady S——) if such
 " fine spirits as the present are permitted
 " to govern." This occasioned a laugh,
 and every one again seemed attentive to
 their cards: but Charles took his leave of
 the company; and this, joined to some
 more cogent reasons, occasioned them to
 have separate apartments, as they have
 had separate inclinations for a great while.
 Before the company broke up, I slipped
 a pocket-

a pocket-book into Mrs. Melmoth's hand with notes for five hundred pounds, to make what use of them her prudence might dictate; observing, that I would settle it with Lord Eastman at his return. But one good has arisen from this disagreeable evening: poor Frederick's eyes are opened; he now sees the danger of his situation; he acknowledges Mrs. Melmoth is too amiable for his repose, and that his only safety is in flight: he therefore proposes to be in Paris, and thence to proceed to V——: but that will only be to cherish his hopeless love; for you will both so fervently join in her praises, that will be continually reminding him of her perfections. He sets out next week. I leave all to your prudence. We both called at Mr. Melmoth's the day after the aforesaid evening; but were told that lady was very ill, and kept her room; but I cannot find any physician attends her.

her. Jenny had been weeping. Lord Belgrave going to the carriage first, I stepped back, and asked her if there were any apprehensions of danger? She said, "There was no danger but from her master's ill-usage; and that, although her mistress was so prudent as to endeavour to conceal it, yet his brutality could not be hidden from her:" adding, "that her heart was full, or she should not speak; but she wished some of her mistress's friends would write to Lord Eastmain." I told her it was a delicate point; but I would see what could be done. She begged I would not give the least hint to her mistress that she had told me. I love Jenny for her faithfulness to the sweet sufferer; and she shall not go unrewarded. I am apprehensive it is owing to his jealousy of Belgrave; and yet I once thought he did not love her well enough to be jealous: let the cause be what it will, it must give her friends

friends unspeakable concern: if it should proceed from Belgrave, it will doubly afflict

Your ever affectionate
friend and brother,

G. MULCESTER.

This will be followed by another letter, as soon as I can learn the true state of Mrs. Melmoth's case.

L E T T E R L.

Mr. MELMOTH to Sir J. HAZZELDINE.

A FINE piece of work, Sir James, is here! and all of my own seeking. I am ruined, by Jupiter! I have done *your* business, but spoiled *my own*.
I advanced

I advanced your unlicked cub what you desired. Mr. T—— was not in town; so that passed off as a mistake, especially as his uncle had sent for him to B——. I was so kind as to take the Baronet to a dowager lady of quality, where there were half a dozen women of fashion assembled, all anxious to know when Sir James came to town. But who do you think this good old dowager was? Mother B——. The two L——s, in high keeping, flaming in mock jewels, and some other of their companions, were there also, dressed and painted out according to custom. Leaving them, we went to Lady Charles's route, and so on through the whole round. Afterwards I took him in my chaise to D——, and saw both mother and girl; both as artful, as can be supposed, for the design they have in view. The mother stands much *on her honour*: she took me aside, begged I would speak to Sir Marmaduke, and protested.

tested she was afraid of Miss Harris's character; on which account she wished he would keep from her house: she had offers enough for her daughters, but she did not want to force them into any family. I seemed to credit the whole farce; so we parted good friends. The Baronet, under pretence of going to Reading, staid behind to pursue his purpose, which I suppose will end in a trip to Scotland. But hear the sequel—When I returned, I found a most terrible *fracas* had happened at home—duns upon duns, and threatenings without number from Isaac. I was consumedly plagued at this important time—No money, nor any possibility of raising any, except Lord Mulcester would advance, or my fool of a wife would endeavour to raise some. Well, I applied to Lord Mulcester, but to no effect. I underwent a severe lecture, indeed; but no money, except Lord Eastmain (a plague take his Lordship! there

there is a second edition of ill news, for he is much better) would join in the security. Thus balked, I was in a horrid temper, you may be sure. My last resource was Belgrave, who came soon after dinner, as we had a private party at our house. I called my obstinate, pious wife out of the room, and insisted that she should ask Belgrave to relieve me. "She would not, positively she would not." "But you shall, madam, (said I) and let me see that you obey me." She burst into tears. "None of those airs to me:" I took her hand, and pulled her (rather roughly, I believe, but not too much so for the occasion) into the dining parlour: "Stay there (said I) till you are in a better humour; and do your duty as I order you." She returned to the company some time after, but with a very dejected air. Lord Belgrave flew to her to learn what occasioned her dejection; but the perverse idiot would not

not then avail herself of the infatuation that was visible to every eye, to get a few thousands, though she might have done it, and vented her spleen into the bargain. I was confounded mad; and when the company went away, I marched off to the Piazza, and staid till morning. When I returned, about eight o'clock, I found some people waiting in the hall, and understood they came, by Mrs. Melmoth's orders, to be paid some bills. Oh! ho! madam, thought I, although Mulcester would not lend *me*, he has done as much for *you*; but I will be even with you—So up-stairs I mounted; and there was madam with bank-notes and guineas before her, and Booth, the house-steward, waiting to pay the rascals below. “What is all this about?” (said I.) She started and coloured: “I am paying the trades-people, Mr. Melmoth.” “Paying the trades-people, Mrs. Melmoth! Stop, madam.—You may go down, Booth.”

Here

Here the varlet hesitated, and looked at his lady. " Take the money, Booth, " (said she, with infinite composure) pay " the good people, and I will settle with " you afterwards." " Stop, Booth, (said " I, in a menacing tone) till I order you." But he made scarcely more than one step down stairs, ran through the hall and out of doors without his hat, telling the people to follow him. And thus was the money, to the amount of five hundred pounds, irrecoverably gone; for which I ordered the scoundrel to quit my service: but he had the assurance to tell me he would not, till he was paid his wages, and some money which he had advanced for the use of the house. I threatened to cane him; but still he persisted in his refusal. Fraught with all those provocations, I returned to my disobedient plague, who sat in state, as if she had done the most meritorious action in the world. " So, madam, (said I) you think " you

“ you have acted a very wise part; but
 “ you shall dearly repent it.”—— Her
 cursed composure, and the asperity of
 her answer, joined to the former insults,
 left me no command of myself: I
 gave her a push, and she fell from the
 chair, and struck herself against a cabinet,
 which made her nose bleed. I ran out
 of the room, and sent in her favourite,
 prudish Jenny; since which time I have
 never seen her: for I sent in my com-
 pliments, (but more from fear than love)
 but was refused admittance, because truly
 she was too ill to speak. What the sullen
 puss is meditating, I cannot think; but
 no good to me, I doubt. I must con-
 trive to render her scheme, whatever it
 is, abortive; and that will be no difficult
 matter, as plotting is not her talent.—
 Oh! that my uncle were but fairly under-
 ground! madam should walk off.— I dare
 say she is making out a fine tale for Lord
 Eastmain, and her vixen friend, Lady
 Lucy.

Lucy. I shall have the whole clan on my back. I am sorry I touched her. But was it not very provoking, when I wanted money so much, for her to pay a set of people who might have waited another year; besides, when all matters are so ripe for the scheme I mentioned to you at N——? But the haughty minx will give me no chance. Either death or a divorce would do; I care not which: but, as I said before, she will give me no hopes. I am sure she regards Belgrave; yet not one word or action escapes her, that can give the least room for censure, much less to ground any suit on. What must I do? her white angel and my black one must have a struggle.

But the worst of all is, that Belgrave sets off to-morrow for Paris, in pursuance of his tutor, Lord Mulcaster's direction. I have but one hope, which rests on her keeping herself very private; and, as she
has

has denied to see Lord Belgrave, and even Mulcester, it seems as if she wished to keep the *fracas* a secret.

Sir Marmaduke called in his way back; he seemed full of some important matter, which you know by this time, I suppose. I shall set out for D—— to-morrow, and tamper with Mrs. Harris. Perhaps, by my return, my fair implacable may venture to get out of her pouts. Make haste, Hazzeldine; for both our affairs are on a crisis, either to shine, or be quite annihilated. It depends on vigilance, which I am sure will be exerted by you, as well as by

Your

J. MELMOTH.

Mulcester has just been here (but looks as grim on me as the Devil, and as stately as the Grand Signior) to know if Madam Marplot has any commands for V—— : so Belgrave is going to pace thither with his gazette.

LETTER LI.

Sir JAMES HAZZELDINE to Mr.
MELMOTH.

Dear MELMOTH,

I AM in the utmost agitation!—A desperate stroke must now be struck. Sir Marmaduke, as may be supposed, has made me his confident. His lady mother has got a special licence: the other guardian is to be here next week. They have been in vain persuading the sweet Susannah to marry the young Baronet by fair means; but arguments not prevailing, they have shewn her a clause in the copy of her father's will, (which he, poor man! never wrote) wherein she is to forfeit half her fortune if she does not marry their cub. With tears and bitter lamentations, she has made a confidante of the widow, who,

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with great love, friendship, and kindness, offered her her protection; but all under the mask of the strictest piety and prudence. She has persuaded the unsuspecting girl to be directed by her in all her future proceedings. The proper plan is laid: Marmaduke is furnished with money to elope. The old lady has consulted me on most occasions, (although she has not let me into the true secret.) I shall pursue the Baronet when he sets out for Scotland. I cannot communicate by writing what I would wish to say: so meet me at Northampton, for on that depends our future success.

Adieu, Jack!

Your's,

JAMES HAZZELDINE.

LETTER

LETTER LII.

LORD BELGRAVE TO LORD MULCESTER.

Paris, March 20, 17—.

HERE I am, my dear Lord Mulcester!

“ ——— But oh! my wretched mind!

“ I’ve left,—I’ve left my soul behind!”

It is in vain, George, to endeavour to hide from you the sentiments of my heart. The friend, the angelic woman, that sweetened life, no longer appears to cheer the social or solitary hour. I sought, my George, as I imagined, a friendship free from fault, where neither sex nor beauty was in question. I loved her with a brother’s love; because her soul resembled my Mulcester’s; whilst in her I

beheld the female softness joined with manly prudence and fortitude. But envy, which is all over eyes and ears, alters, adds, and so defames as she thinks proper, and spreads the pleasing scandal as she flies with pestilential wings from circle to circle. The prudent, the suffering angel herself looked on me with a preference; the mantling, the sparkling, expressive eye has spoke that Belgrave's presence has not been unwelcome: but this has been only discerned by the piercing eye of friendship; the herd that surrounded could not guess at those refined feelings.—Oh! Mulcaster! what may she not feel from the tyrant's power! Ease my heart, if you can, on her account.—But whither am I rambling? Let me conclude with the Poet:

“ Thy thoughts swell to crimes; drive
“ this love from thy breast;
“ Perform well thy duty; let Fate do
“ the rest.”

I purpose to set out for Rheims tomorrow in my way to V——, Excellent young man! endeavour to impart some of your prudence to

The disconsolate

BELORAVEL

I shall leave Victoire behind at Lisle, to bring your favours after me to V——.

LETTER LIII.

Lady L. TEMPLE to Lord MULCESTER.

I HAVE just time, my dear George, to scrawl a few lines. Lord Belgrave, amiable youth! is setting out for the Hague to-morrow morning. He wants sea room and land room, as Lady G—— says. You will guess the state of his mind better from the inclosed sonnet, than I can tell you. He dropped it by accident from his pocket; and my mother's Abigail brought it to me, thinking it was mine. It is set to some music composed on the banks of the Volga, which I sent Harriet before I left England.

Oh! stay, ye fleeting moments, stay;
Nor wound a heart which breaks in twain:
Fly ye not so swift away;
Have pity on a lover's pain! And

And must I ne'er behold thee more?
 Take then, dear maid, this last adieu!
 All joy, all hope, alas! are o'er;
 I lose them all in losing you.

On some sad, distant, dismal coast
 I'll wander wild, a wretch unknown!
 Nor will I mourn my country lost;
 My sighs shall rise for you alone.

When dying on a foreign shore
 I last pronounce your gentle name,
 The pitying winds shall waft it o'er,
 And you shall mourn my hapless flame.

I will suppose you have read this sonnet—Do you think his wound will admit of a cure? How is Harriet?—but not well, I am sure. Oh! the dear creature! to be thus sacrificed! To a world beyond this, I doubt, she must look for a reward. Lord Belgrave is to be pitied also; for an attachment like his, neither seas, distance,

nor the hand of time can lessen. Several women of rank and merit in this country, as well as in England, have felt, to their cost, the power of his fine person and manners: one lady in particular made him an offer of her person, but met with no returns from Belgrave. His fair friend has made him eyeless and lifeless to every other beauty. Our dear parents feel too much for their repose, in the ill consequences of Charles's marriage: they now wish he had either remained single, or married a woman of inferior fortune, provided that she had entertained what fine ladies call inferior notions. I am unhappy, my brother, beyond expression. The heart-felt anxiety for the welfare of a bosom friend is more readily felt by one of your refined sentiments, than all the powers of rhetoric could paint.—Hasten to me your next packet; but I hope it is on the way.

That

That angels may guard you, is the
prayer of

Your affectionate friend and sister,

LUCY TEMPLE.

L E T T E R L I V .

LORD MULCESTER to Lady L. TEMPLE.

SOON, too soon for your repose, my
Lucy, and for that of our honoured
parents, will this express reach your hand.
Break it as well as you can to them.
I must write in the form of a journal, or
perhaps you will not immediately com-
prehend what I mean. If my last packet
has reached you, you will find an account
of a Lady Cosway, her niece and son, &c.

D 5

I know

I know not well where to begin: my mind is in a state of anarchy and uproar. I have told you of Harriet's illness, and the supposed cause of it. I was denied admittance—from prudential motives, I dare say. As she has never been deficient in any point of duty to the worthless wretch (sorry am I to say, I mean her husband) those crimes she cannot conceal, she studies to extenuate. Lord Belgrave (on the same account, you may be sure) could only leave his farewell on a card. Poor fellow! how my heart bleeds for him! like him having felt the pangs of disappointed love. What an ornament would this virtuous pair be to society!—But away with such vain—I was going to say, impious—thoughts. Yet

“Love is not sin, except 'tis sinful love.”

Pardon the digression, Lucy: I almost *wish* to run from my subject.

When

When I thought Frederick had crossed the Channel, I again waited on Mrs. Melmoth; but she was too much indisposed to see me: yet none of the medical tribe attended her. This passed on for several days. At length I received a very alarming card from her. She begged to see me as soon as possible. I was at breakfast with the good old Doctor G——, of the Museum; but I immediately obeyed her summons. I saw a parcel of ill-looking creatures in the hall, and the lady herself in her dressing-room in tears. I learned from Jenny, that an execution was brought into the house from one Isaacs, a Jew broker; that Mr. Melmoth had been absent for three days, and no one could give an account of him. I comforted the amiable sufferer as well as I could, and sent for my attorney; intending to secure the plate, furniture, &c. to Mrs. Melmoth. But this debt, or pretended debt, is for five thousand pounds: I paid part

of the money, and gave security for the remainder; determining to go to Eastmain to Mr. Hunter, the steward, who resides on the estate, and is really a very honest man. But news arrived that evening, that Mr. Melmoth, and Sir James Hazzeldine had carried off an heiress, niece of Lady Cosway; and had likewise been the means of Sir Marmaduke Cosway, who is not of age, running to Scotland with a young woman of doubtful character. A Lord Chief-Justice's warrant was issued to search the house; but, by his Lordship's order, all respect was shewn to Mrs. Melmoth, and her word was taken. The next day an advertisement appeared in the Hague Gazette, describing all the parties, and specifying that the Minister in Holland had refused to marry them. Lady Cosway is in town, and applied to me. One of the guardians, with proper authority, immediately went to Holland, but in vain; for they had
made

made their escape to French Flanders; and the lady, being a catholic, no doubt will meet with protection.

Harriet's tender nature is overcome with these tumults: she took to her bed the moment the Gazette appeared, which Charles, thro' inadvertence, had brought to her. I intreated Mrs. Varenny sometimes to look in on her in my absence. On my return to town, I met a messenger from Mr. Varenny at Colnbrook, who informed me of some of the following melancholy particulars; the rest I learned from Mrs. Varenny, poor Jenny, and Booth. The second night after I set out, Mr. Melmoth came *to his own house in disguise* about midnight. Mrs. Melmoth was much better that day than she had been for some time past, and was then writing. He addressed her very abruptly, and asked her for her keys, as he said that he had been informed, from good authority,

authority, she carried on a clandestine correspondence with Lord Belgrave. “ It is false, (said Jenny, in the height of “ zeal for her mistress) my lady will not “ do any thing clandestine.” The brute took the faithful creature by the arm, and put her out of doors, though it was midnight; and Booth followed her to a neighbouring house, and got her a lodging, and then returned to see that no violence was offered to his lady, who, not apprehending the wretch’s intention, had given him her keys. He took her jewels, and packed up all the plate, and delivered it to his myrmidons, five or six of whom were in waiting. And this was his pretence for the keys. The common servants were all in bed; and Booth, as his lady gave no orders, did not think proper to interfere. As soon as Melmoth had quitted the house, which was about two in the morning, Booth brought Jenny back to his mistress, who at day-light stole

stole away to Mrs. Vareny. That worthy lady came immediately to the weeping angel: but by this time the house was filled with sheriff's officers. Mrs. Vareny took Mrs. Melmoth home with her.—Before noon came tidings that Charles's wife had eloped, and, as supposed, with Mr. Melmoth, and had taken with her her jewels: her clothes had been removed some days before; therefore it was a pre-concerted scheme. Charles was at Bath; but he came away post as soon as his misfortune was made known. The consternation we are all in on the occasion, is almost beyond description. Charles is almost raving; for she has left him such a letter, as, one would think, an infernal spirit could only dictate: and yesterday Melmoth sent a most audacious scrawl to Mr. Vareny, charging him not to harbour his wife; wherein he bestows on her all the opprobrious names his diabolical heart can suggest. The sweet sufferer set out
 this

this morning for Rose Mount. Jenny is taken very ill, and unable to attend her; nor would it be proper for me to escort her. I doubt she will meet but a cool reception from Peregrine. I have written to Lord Eastmain, to acquaint him with all the particulars, and to beg, if his health will permit, he will hasten his return; for he must now supply the place of every tender relation to her. Charles has been pursuing his worthless wife, but to no purpose; she is far enough out of his reach.—I will dispatch another letter as soon as I can inform you any thing more of your dear, unhappy friend. If possible, keep these disagreeable circumstances from reaching Lord Belgrave's ear. Write to caution him against flying rumours; or he will be for coming to England; and I would not for the world he should be here at this time. Happy are you, my Lucy, under the eye of your watchful parents. Distressed and
 fatigued

fatigued as I am, this reflection gives comfort to

Your friend and brother,

G. MULCESTER.

LETTER LV.

Mrs. MELMOTH to Lady LUCY TEMPLE.

[Inclosed in the following letter.]

My dearest Lucy,

THIS is the third letter unanswered: surely you will not forsake your Harriet in her distress. My Lucy is all goodness: I cannot, I must not, judge of you by common manners. I hinted to you in my last, how extremely unhappy I was about my brother; that he had a
woman

woman with him, whom he was obliged, for common decency's sake, to send to a farm-house on my account. This, I knew, must be a restraint both on him and her; nevertheless I thought my own brother's house the properest place for me to reside at till Lord Eastmain's return. — Oh! my dearest friend! what bitter pangs did I feel, compared with those which once I passed on this delightful spot, the scene of my former tranquil days! But now

What are the twilight groves, the dusky
shades,

The morning bow'rs, the ev'ning colon-
nades,

But soft recesses for th' uneasy mind
To sigh unheard in to the passing wind?
So the poor deer, a lone, sequester'd beast,
Lies down to weep (the arrow in his breast);
There, hid in shades, he moans from day
to day;

Inly he bleeds, and sighs his soul away.

I have

I have taken a step, which I hope, my dear, you will not condemn: but I will tell you how it happened. Peregrine had on several occasions given me to understand what an unwelcome guest I was. I once thought of going; but, as I expected Lord Mulcester would very shortly hear from Lord Eastmain, I determined to wait his pleasure. But Peregrine going to the monthly meeting of the gentlemen of the county, I was surprised with a visit from the fair *incognita* I mentioned so long ago. She informed me, that she was perfectly well acquainted with all my distresses, and how unhappily I was situated at my brother's; adding, that the notice with which I once would have honoured her, she was now come to solicit; that, all obstacles on her part being removed, her retreat was at my service till the return of Lord Eastmain. She gave such cogent reasons why I should be out of Mr. Melmoth's reach, and those reasons

reasons she enforced with so much sweetness, that I could not help comparing her habitation with my brother's, which is now a scene of riot and confusion; —and, all things considered, I, like most other human beings, found in my own mind right reasonings for what appeared so very agreeable to myself: but she begged that, for my own safety as well as her's, I would not let Peregrine know her place of residence: therefore we agreed that I should go in my brother's carriage to S——, and then take a post-chaise for three stages, where she would meet me, and convey me to her retreat. She took her leave before the return of Peregrine. He could scarcely contain his satisfaction when I told him my resolution of going to town: he parted from me with unconcern. I dismissed his carriage and servants at S——, and proceeded to the place appointed; where this truly agreeable lady met, and conducted me
to

to her hospitable mansion, where she has taken infinite care to render every thing pleasing. How tenderly, how affectionately does she endeavour to alleviate my sorrows! but no way can be found. If a glimpse of hope darts on my mind, like a ray of light on a benighted traveller, it instantly vanishes, and leaves me more bewildered. Oh! my Lucy! I want your comforting advice, your guiding hand, to lead me through this thorny wilderness. Mrs. Mountney, for that is the name of my kind protectress, (is that a word for me, Lucy?) all-pleasing as she is both by nature and education, wants something to constitute my dearest Lucy. — Truly affecting is this story of Mrs. Mountney's, that appeared to us such a mystery: she has promised to give it me in writing, which will be some time in performing, as there are many perplexing circumstances in it; when it is ready, I will transmit it to you. In the mean
time

time believe me, my dearest, my best-beloved friend, my dear Lucy,

Your's,

Although unspeakably unhappy,

HARRIET *****.

P. S. I shall go to church to B—— to-morrow, and put this in the post myself, inclosed to Lord Mulcester. I hope he will soon hear from Lisbon; till then I am really miserable.

L E T T E R LVI.

Lord MULCESTER to Lady L. TEMPLE.

I Never, my dear Lucy, was in greater consternation, doubt and anxiety, than I am at present.—On Tuesday last I received

received the inclosed, unsealed, under a cover, with a few lines to beg I would seal it, and send it to you by the first opportunity. I did not wonder at her leaving her brother's, but wish she had returned to town: however, as she has described her situation, and I doubt not the rectitude of her heart, she must be much happier than at Rose Mount, notwithstanding the malicious insinuations thrown out. But there is no describing those things, except you write to the time present when the transactions occurred.

On the Friday following I received a packet from Lord Eastmain, in answer to one which I had sent,—not the account of Melmoth's black actions. I wished to shew Mrs. Melmoth this letter, with such an agreeable account of her uncle's health. I set out post without a servant, as the retreat of Mrs. Mountney was not to be known: but guess my surprise, at my arrival,

arrival, to hear from an old person who was left in charge of the house, that the ladies had been gone away twenty hours before, and no one could tell whither. I returned much chagrined, and was inclined to apprehend that Melmoth had found her out; and yet I think it could scarcely be possible, as he is under the threat of the law. I had just changed my dress after my journey, when Charles came with an account that was current in all the coffee-houses, and soon after confirmed by a letter from Sir James Hazzeldine to Mr. Ashford, that Lord Belgrave had wounded Mr. Melmoth (as it was apprehended, mortally) in a duel; that this rencounter happened near Cambray; and that Belgrave had taken Mrs. Melmoth away. Harriet's not being to be found gives sanction to the report—to the scandal, I ought to say; for scandal I am sure it is: altho' Mrs. B——t, like Mrs. Blast in the Spectator, has tired

three

three pair of horses to fly about the town and tell every one she comes near, that Mrs. Melmoth has run away with Lord Belgrave, and that his Lordship has run Mr. Melmoth through the body, as the former was endeavouring to take his wife from him. Inconsistent as this story is, it gains ground: both Mrs. Varenny and myself are strangely puzzled on the account, not from any doubt of Harriet, but from what can give rise to it. I have dispatched a message to Mrs. Mountney's to see if they are returned. I will not close this till I have an answer; till which time I shall be in the utmost perplexity.

I cannot with common patience bear Mrs. Blaſt. Do not be angry with me, Lucy; but I cannot help thinking that detraction is almost a female vice: it is true some men are given to it, but not equally with the women in general. I wish B——t had half the good qualities

of her whom she endeavours so much to depreciate. But she is indeed a most unaccountable woman: she not only does not love any body, but she hates every body. The statue of Pasquin in Rome does not serve to vent malice half so well as this lady. She does not know the author of any thing that is told her, and yet can readily repeat the matter itself; nay, she often appeals to her husband, who is obliged to confirm what she says, although he believes it a falsehood, or have his ears boxed, as she holds him by an apron-string tenure. You never saw this queen of scandal: she visits Lady C—— F——. Had she lived in the Spectator's time, every one would have supposed she sat for the following picture, drawn by Mr. Addison:

“ The Lady Blast, you must under-
 “ stand, has such a particular malignity
 “ in her whisper, that it blights like an
 “ easterly

“ easterly wind, and withers every repu-
 “ tation that it breathes upon. She has
 “ a particular knack at making private
 “ weddings, and last winter married above
 “ five women of quality to their footmen.
 “ She can turn a visit into an intrigue,
 “ and a distant salute into an assignation.
 “ She can beggar the wealthy, and de-
 “ grade the noble. In short, she can
 “ whisper men base or foolish, jealous or
 “ ill-natured, or, if occasion required,
 “ can tell you the slips of their great
 “ grandmothers, and traduce the memory
 “ of honest coachmen who have been in
 “ their graves above these hundred years.”

The above is the Spectator's Lady Blast,
 and B——t (the Mrs. Blast of our time)
 is the exact counterpart of her. I detest
 her character so much, that I cannot,
 when I meet her, treat her with common
 civility. She was in such a hurry to
 propagate this story of poor Harriet, that

she came to Mrs. Vareny's before breakfast; and as she knew the regard Mrs. Vareny had for Harriet, she took such malicious pleasure in aggravating every circumstance. She has a particular manner of turning up her nose, and a supercilious toss with her head, that gives the story she is telling the worst appearance. You can now have an idea of her saying, " Ah! I always thought, notwithstanding " her demureness, she was not very good " at the bottom: so, you see, poor Mel- " moth is not so much to be blamed as " we thought. Mr. B——t said she was " fly." Mr. Vareny stopped her short, saying, " Madam, my ears are never open " to scandal, nor my doors to the retailers " of it." She put her cloak on in a hurry, and ran to her chair; since which time this worthy family have not been troubled with her visits. I have been very minute in my description of this viper, that, if any reports from common
fame

same should reach your ears, you may place it to this second Mrs. Blaft's account.

The messenger is returned, but has only added to my perplexity. He brings me word, that Mrs. Mountney has quitted her house, and taken away the furniture; that a young gentleman, dressed like an officer, came and paid the rent; and they could give no account whither the ladies were gone. About an hour after, I received the inclosed letter from Lady C—— F——:

ed from the end of the world
 and the end of the world
 and the end of the world
 and the end of the world
 and the end of the world
 and the end of the world
 and the end of the world
 and the end of the world

Lady C—— F—— to Lord MULCESTER.

I SHALL not apologize to your Lordship for this epistle, as it proceeds from motives of friendship to Mrs. Melmoth. I was acquainted by letter with Mr. Mel-

moth's and Lady Charles's going off. I am heartily sorry for the misfortunes of your family. I pity Mrs. Melmoth from my soul, and am extremely shocked at the reports spread to her disadvantage; but was ten times more so, when my woman Hallam told me, that her brother (who is an exciseman) saw Mrs. Melmoth, at an inn at Theale, in company with a woman of infamous character, a French nobleman, and a young officer; that they all went away together in a post-coach to this woman's house, who lives near Newbury, and is called Miss Spencer. I certainly think Hallam's brother must be deceived; but she says she is sure that he knows Mrs. Melmoth very well, and pulled off his hat to her. I thought it requisite to inform you of these particulars, that you may, if you please, give her warning of the company into which she is got, as I suppose she cannot know their real characters, (which are very bad indeed)

indeed) or she would not keep company with them. I did not care to write to her myself, as the point is so very delicate. I repeat, that I respect Mrs. Melmoth: I must not endanger my reputation on her account. I shall rejoice to see her re-instated in the world's good opinion; till which time I must decline her acquaintance, but shall be one of the first to congratulate her when the point is cleared up. My most respectful compliments attend Lord Temple, her Ladyship, and Lady Lucy. I am

Your Lordship's obliged friend,

C—— F——.



You see, Lucy, by her Ladyship's letter, the true friendship of a modern Lady. —What a being is this C—— F——! How fond she appeared of poor Mrs.
 E 4 Melmoth!

Melmoth! Whilst fortune smiled, there was no keeping her from Eastmain; but now the prospect is changed, the once courted Harriet may pine in solitude. Lady C—— F—— has without disguise spoke her true feelings. I dare say, she will be one of the first to congratulate her when Lord Eastmain comes home. What a heart must this Lady have, to forsake an amiable woman she was intimate with! For fear of her reputation, is indeed the plea, but a poor one. Such conduct may be dignified by the name of prudence; but I call it cruelty. But Lady C—— is amiable, compared to Mrs. B——t; for the former may urge that she thinks she has done her duty as a friend, in taking the trouble to inform me that Mrs. Melmoth was not in proper company. How different are such sentiments from those of Mr. and Mrs. Varenny and Lord Belgrave! and with pride I add, my sister's sensibility, like their's,
breathes

breathes extensive candour through the heart; for defamation and detraction can find no place in minds like your's. You would not, I am sure, Lucy, prefer your own ease and safety to your friend's welfare, especially in adversity. As to the information given by her Ladyship's letter, I cannot determine on, till I have been in quest of this Miss Spencer, &c. I intend to set out to-morrow, but will dispatch this, and follow it with another, that will, I hope, bring you better tidings from

Your truly affectionate

G. MULCESTER.

L E T T E R LVII.

Lady CHARLES TEMPLE to Lady LUCY.


MADAM,

YOU that are such a ready censor, and have taken such liberties with my character, because I brought your brother such a noble fortune, and chose to spend a little of it myself, and not let him lavish it all away on a set of creatures; and in order to avoid his tyranny, and the family impertinence, have fled to a distant country, where I hope to receive more favour than I found from your hands; be pleased to know, dictatorial Madam, that your friend, the pious, the good, the meek, the humble, the *virtuous* Mrs. Melmoth, has spirited up Lord Belgrave (another of your family's favourites) to fight her husband, who now lies dangerously

gerously ill at Cambray of a wound which he has received from that base assassin. I chose to acquaint you with this, that you may for the future take care how you traduce one that is sorry she is obliged to sign herself

A. TEMPLE.

Mrs. Melmoth is known to be publicly supported by Lord Belgrave. This is notorious, altho' you and your family take such pains to conceal it.



LETTER LVIII.

Lady L. TEMPLE to Lord MULCESTER.

My dear BROTHER,

I HAVE strange things to acquaint you with; but I am too much agitated to write with coherence: however, I will inform you as well as the present state of things will admit. The 10th of last month I received the inclosed infernal scrawl from the abandoned Anne. My father perfectly raved with indignation at the audacious writer. We had scarcely suppressed the emotions it occasioned, when a messenger arrived, his horse all foaming, with a compliment from the Marquis de G—— to beg his Lordship to send one of his carriages to the next stage for himself and a lady, and the reason for this request should be made known

known on his arrival at V——. Both the Earl and Countess had seen this nobleman at Versailles, but were only slightly acquainted with him; therefore this message could not fail of surprising us. A coach and suitable attendants, however, were sent; and that evening the Marquis came and presented to us a very agreeable young lady, who appeared much fatigued: the negligence of her dress, and the languor of her countenance, bespoke a mind ill at ease. A short letter from Lord Belgrave partly explained the mystery. His Lordship begged my mother to receive the young lady under her protection till his arrival at V——, which he hoped would be in a few days. And now be pleased to learn, as follows, what occasioned us this honour: As Lord Belgrave was pursuing his route through French Flanders, in his way to V——, in a wood near Cambray he heard the shrieks of a female in distress. He, with two

or

or three of his attendants, made up to the place from whence the noise proceeded. Two men in masks, and three or four in liveries, were endeavouring to take the before-mentioned young lady from an old gentleman attended by three servants. The old man defended his charge valiantly, till he was overpowered by numbers. They were just forcing the young lady into a chaise, when Lord Belgrave came up and retook her; in executing which he wounded the leader of this gang of worse than robbers, whilst his servants bound the other masked man; for the rest of the servants, all but one Swift, had decamped. By this time a company of peasants, going to market, came up; and the old gentleman being also wounded, by the assistance of those country people he was got into his Lordship's carriage, which proceeded with him and the lady to Cambray, my Lord himself, on one of his servants horses, escorting

ing them; the other wounded person, and the before-mentioned masked prisoner, following in their chaise: but at the entrance of the city they were all taken into custody, by the information of the servants who had run from the rencounter. But the Marquis de G—— being at his castle in the neighbourhood, and Lord Belgrave being well known to him, he obtained leave for his Lordship to be a prisoner at large in his castle, till the fate of the wounded persons is known. The old gentleman is guardian to this young lady; and, as the Marquis proposed coming to his Lordship for his interest to permit Lord Belgrave to pursue his tour to V——, the lady expressed so much terror at the thought of staying in or near the place where the wretches are who would have forced her away, that Lord Belgrave proposed, and was seconded by the Marquis, to intreat her guardian to let her accompany him to V——, and
 remain

remain under our protection, till a proper opportunity offers for her to go with safety to England. Lord Belgrave, through my father's mediation, was permitted to come hither last night; and his Lordship, the Marquis, and the Duke de C——, have given their words for his being forthcoming. I would not write till this affair was in some measure determined, (I mean, with regard to his Lordship's enlargement) lest I should keep you too much in suspense.

I am sorry to tell you he is very much indisposed, owing to his extreme fatigue and anxiety of mind. His too feeling heart, that thrills in every vein for Harriet, and for this recent bustle, has thrown him into a kind of a nervous fever; and his physicians have ordered him to be kept very quiet, and by no means be suffered to write; for which reason I am deputed his amanuensis; and a wonderful tale I
have

have to tell. — Could you, without the spirit of divination, imagine, that the lady under our care is Miss Del Rio, and the wounded ruffian Melmoth? From these circumstances proceeds poor Frederick's anxiety. Assisting a lady in distress was a natural, nay, even a godlike act; but that the person he was obliged to encounter should chance to be Harriet's husband, is, as things are situated, most unlucky. As his Lordship is so strictly commanded not to write, you must therefore expect but a broken narrative, in which I must relate as from the young lady's mouth, and which cannot quite do her justice: because she cannot speak French so fluent as Spanish, and I do not understand the latter, consequently it will lose much of that sweet manner of expression, which accompanies her when she speaks her native language. She told me of her parentage, expectations, &c. " I must, " Madam, (said she) make a strange appearance

“ pearance to you, surrounded only with
 “ men; but, when you hear my story,
 “ you will find I am an *unfortunate*, not
 “ a *guilty* creature. Sir James Hazzel-
 “ dine by his specious manners had gained
 “ some part of my esteem; and, young
 “ and unexperienced as I am, had not
 “ his designs been providentially disco-
 “ vered, might really have gained a place
 “ in my affections. I had, during my
 “ residence at Cosway Hall, formed an
 “ acquaintance with a widow lady, one
 “ Mrs. Conway, a most agreeable, sen-
 “ sible woman; she appeared all sweet-
 “ ness and good-nature, and who is par-
 “ ticularly sociable with my aunt. Lady
 “ Cosway, who saw her son with diffe-
 “ rent eyes from those with which I, or
 “ perhaps any indifferent person, might
 “ behold him, wished, nay, commanded
 “ me to receive him as a husband. Sir
 “ Marmaduke has neither sentiment nor
 “ delicacy. I would as soon have met
 “ death

“ death as such a husband. Afraid to
 “ speak my sentiments to my aunt or
 “ uncle, and as affliction generally makes
 “ people plaintive, I opened my mind to
 “ Mrs. Conway. She soothed me, and
 “ told me the laws of England would
 “ not admit of force in such matters,
 “ and that, if I could seem to give into
 “ their measures, I might gain time till
 “ I was of age, and then I might act as
 “ I thought proper. This advice, you
 “ may suppose, was very pleasing to a
 “ young girl, who detested the proposed
 “ husband, and had a kind of prepos-
 “ session for another. My deceased fa-
 “ ther’s will, indeed, had some weight
 “ with me; but Mrs. Conway solved my
 “ doubts, by telling me that she was sure
 “ my father would, if living, absolve me
 “ from such a punishment as marrying
 “ my cousin, when he knew his dispo-
 “ sition: she likewise told me how much
 “ Sir James loved me, and what diffi-
 “ culty

" culty he had to rein in his passion for
 " me; that he was determined to die
 " rather than to reveal it, lest it should
 " appear to proceed from a selfish motive,
 " as my fortune is such an object of
 " desire. You may be sure, Madam, I
 " could not hear this of a man not wholly
 " indifferent to me, unmoved; and whilst
 " I was thus debating between duty and
 " inclination, Sir James came with great
 " concern to the Hall, and told my aunt
 " that Sir Marmaduke was run away to
 " Scotland with a young woman by no
 " means his equal. Sir James set out in
 " pursuit of him. My aunt carried me
 " to Derby to leave me under Mrs.
 " Conway's care, whilst she followed Sir
 " James. The next day Mrs. Conway
 " prevailed on me to accompany her to
 " conduct Miss Conway to school at about
 " twenty miles distance. We left the
 " young lady at the school; and in our
 " return, to our great surprise, we met
 " Sir

“ Sir James in a seeming great fright.
 “ He told me my cousin was overtaken,
 “ and by his mother’s persuasions brought
 “ back; that my guardian was come
 “ down, and that they were determined
 “ to marry me to Sir Marmaduke that
 “ night. I threw myself into Mrs. Con-
 “ way’s arms, and begged her to protect
 “ me. She told me, she durst not em-
 “ broil herself with persons of such con-
 “ sequence and fortune as Sir Charles
 “ Barham and Lady Cosway; but, if I
 “ would put myself into Sir James’s pro-
 “ tection, who was a man of honour,
 “ and he would take me to his sister’s,
 “ in the mean time she would endeavour
 “ to prevail on them to grant me time to
 “ bring myself to a compliance with their
 “ desires. Almost a stranger to England,
 “ to the manners, to the customs; Sir
 “ James and Mrs. Conway behaving with
 “ so much respect and apparent friend-
 “ ship; I gave my hand to Sir James,
 “ and

“ and stepped into his chariot, and was
 “ by him conducted across the country
 “ near forty miles to his sister’s house, as
 “ I was told; a very agreeable, middle-
 “ aged gentlewoman, who received me
 “ with maternal kindness, as I then
 “ thought. When I was the next day
 “ a little recovered from the fatigue of
 “ travelling so many miles in a few hours,
 “ although nothing could alleviate the
 “ pain of my mind, I was conscious of
 “ something wrong; and yet I was in
 “ such confusion, that I could not tell
 “ whom to blame, whether myself or
 “ others. The lady who entertained me,
 “ (for to this hour I do not know her
 “ name) when I had, as I said before,
 “ a little overcome my fatigue and sur-
 “ prise, expatiated much on duty to pa-
 “ rents and guardians; but said, if an
 “ improper use was made of such autho-
 “ rity, the oppressed person was not to be
 “ voluntarily made unhappy; but that,
 “ except

“ except very rigid terms were insisted
 “ on, she would advise me to return as
 “ soon as matters were softened; not but
 “ that I should be welcome to her house,
 “ and supply the place of a daughter she
 “ had lost some years before. Several
 “ more kind and tender things she said;
 “ and you may imagine, Madam, I did
 “ not like her the less for her seemingly
 “ prudential and disinterested advice. Sir
 “ James set out the day after my arrival
 “ to know how matters went in my ab-
 “ sence; but returned in a great fright,
 “ with an account that the place of my
 “ retreat was discovered, and the whole
 “ family was coming after me to force
 “ me back to marry my cousin, and that
 “ I had no safety but in flight. Terrified
 “ almost to death, guided, or rather,
 “ like an infatuated person, led by the
 “ enchanters in what manner they pleased,
 “ I suffered myself to be carried by them
 “ wherever they pleased, and never once
 “ awakened

“ awakened from my stupefaction till I
 “ was brought to the sea-side. I was
 “ then startled; but silenced with such
 “ reasonings as at that time appeared
 “ very plausible. Sir James told me,
 “ his sister was exceedingly alarmed at
 “ the thoughts of the sea, but would
 “ endeavour to overcome her fears to
 “ accompany me. This friendship (for
 “ such it then appeared) overcame me:
 “ I thanked her in the most grateful
 “ terms, and no longer hesitated to go
 “ on board the vessel; where I found the
 “ gentleman who is now left wounded at
 “ Cambray, and whose name I find is
 “ Melmoth, and a young lady, whom
 “ he said he had brought to attend me.
 “ I should have told you, Holland was
 “ our place of destination, and pointed
 “ out to me as the only place of safety
 “ for me. Both Sir James’s sister and
 “ the young lady seemed to strive which
 “ should shew me most civilities: yet I
 “ was

“ was overwhelmed with confusion to
 “ think what a foolish runaway I must
 “ appear in the eyes of indifferent peo-
 “ ple. To Holland we came; and there,
 “ after some time, it was pointed out to
 “ me, both by Mr. Melmoth and Sir
 “ James’s sister, that, from some hints
 “ which had been thrown out, my repu-
 “ tation would suffer, if I did not con-
 “ descend to accept of Sir James for a
 “ husband. This information, and this
 “ advice, proceeded from some intelli-
 “ gence brought by a young officer, a
 “ relation of Mrs. Conway’s. Sir James
 “ then, for the first time, ventured to
 “ declare his affection for me. In short,
 “ what with persuasion, and I thought
 “ the properest step that could then be
 “ taken, I consented to have him: but,
 “ for some reasons, no clergyman would
 “ perform the ceremony, till we were all
 “ described, &c. in a news-paper. This
 “ shocked me beyond description. I now

“ saw in its true light the imprudent
 “ step I had taken; but it was too late
 “ to retract. Besides, I could not speak
 “ a word of the language; and, sur-
 “ rounded as I was, except some persons
 “ of power appeared in my behalf, it
 “ was a mere impossibility for me to re-
 “ turn to England without their consent:
 “ if I proposed it, so many difficulties
 “ were pointed out, that I was obliged
 “ to acquiesce with them; Sir James all
 “ this time treating me with the highest
 “ respect. But we hurried about from
 “ town to town, (being pursued, I sup-
 “ pose) and at length came to a retired
 “ house in a village, where was an Eng-
 “ lish lady of quality. We staid there
 “ some time; when Sir James abated of
 “ that violent respect he had before shewn
 “ me, and often took liberties with me
 “ which called my resentment upon him.
 “ His sister was gone to France, where
 “ I was to follow as soon as I could with
 “ safety.

“ safety. When they were gone, Sir
 “ James pressed me to acknowledge my-
 “ self married to him; that the foolish
 “ ceremony was of little account; that
 “ the search after us (at least the heat of
 “ it) would be over of course; and then
 “ we might set out for Scotland, and be
 “ united according to law, as our minds
 “ were already. Guess, my dear Madam,
 “ the horror, the indignation, which I
 “ conceived at such a proposal: yet I did
 “ not shew my resentment to him, but
 “ flew to the English lady, who (to my
 “ unspeakable surprise) seconded him.
 “ Lord have mercy on the poor Susan-
 “ nah! said I; what will become of me
 “ now? I went into the garden to ad-
 “ dress the Blessed Virgin to protect an
 “ unhappy maid; when a rustling from
 “ behind a juniper hedge alarmed me.
 “ I was returning to the house with pre-
 “ cipitation; but the young officer before
 “ mentioned came forward from the
 F 2 “ hedge,

“ hedge, and begged me not to be
 “ alarmed, as he wished to say some-
 “ thing to me for my service. He then
 “ told me, I was in the hands of a set of
 “ sharpers, and that the English woman
 “ of quality was a vile adulteress, and
 “ they had all designs on my fortune;
 “ adding, that with great contrition he
 “ must acknowledge he had been but too
 “ much concerned with them, as he did
 “ not think there was much harm in
 “ being accessary to my marriage with
 “ Sir James, as he thought him a much
 “ more eligible man than Sir Marma-
 “ duke; but, when he found they were
 “ determined to stick at nothing to ac-
 “ complish their design, and wished to
 “ deprive me of my honour in order that
 “ I might be glad to own a marriage,
 “ and be at their disposal, it shocked him
 “ so much, that he wished for an oppor-
 “ tunity to speak to me in private; for
 “ my guardian was at Utrecht, very ill
 “ with

“ with the gout, which had stopped his
 “ pursuit of me for the present ; and that
 “ neither Sir James, nor Mr. Melmoth,
 “ dared to appear out of the confines of
 “ the village where we then were, lest
 “ we should be discovered. He said, that
 “ I might trust to his honour, if I would
 “ be guided by him ; that he was a gentle-
 “ man born ; but his pressing necessities,
 “ and the company he had been driven
 “ to associate with, had made him often
 “ act contrary to his inclinations ; but
 “ this last scheme against me had opened
 “ his eyes to his vices, and he hoped to
 “ do me such an essential piece of service,
 “ as, he trusted, would cancel the faults
 “ he had been guilty of on my account,
 “ especially since, whether he had or had
 “ not been concerned, the scheme was so
 “ deep-laid, I must have been taken in
 “ their snares. He begged I would re-
 “ turn to the company with as much
 “ composure as possible, and treat Sir

“ James with as much familiarity as de-
 “ licacy would permit; that as he always
 “ went to the next principal town for
 “ news, and to a particular place for let-
 “ ters, he would seek my guardian, and
 “ bring him to me, since there was no
 “ need for apprehensions on Sir Marmaduke’s account, because he had been
 “ married in Scotland before Lady Cosway could reach the borders; and that
 “ Sir James well knew this, as he had
 “ furnished the young gentleman with
 “ means for his journey, &c. and only
 “ wished to spirit me away before this
 “ piece of intelligence could come to my
 “ knowledge. Several circumstances, now
 “ my eyes were opened, concurred to
 “ make me blame my own credulity;
 “ but that seemed now too late. I re-
 “ turned to the house, and tried, as much
 “ as was in my power, to be civil to the
 “ monsters. The deceivers for once were
 “ deceived.— That evening I played on
 “ my

“ my guittar, and sung them several
 “ songs, which rather suited my then
 “ situation, than to talk with them: but
 “ afterwards I complained of being taken
 “ suddenly ill, (indeed it was not a fal-
 “ lacy) and retired to my chamber sooner
 “ than usual,—not to rest, you may sup-
 “ pose, Madam,—but to pour out my
 “ whole soul in prayers to the Blessed
 “ Virgin and all the Saints to favour my
 “ escape. All that day, and the next,
 “ I waited in the utmost anxiety, whilst
 “ I was obliged to wear a chearful coun-
 “ tenance in the presence of my gaolers.
 “ I walked with Sir James in the gar-
 “ den; I sung to him, when he asked
 “ me; in short, I dissembled as much as
 “ it was possible for a young woman to
 “ do that has not a deceitful heart. On
 “ the morning of the third day I heard
 “ the name of Del Rio pronounced; a
 “ welcome sound to me. A great bustle
 “ ensued; and soon after some men, in
 “ habits

“ habits of a name belonging to their
 “ office, like that which in Spain we call
 “ an Alguifil, came into my apartment:
 “ (Hazzeldine and Melmoth had absconded.) “ Madam, (said they) your
 “ guardian is below, and impatient to
 “ see you.” I ran down, and threw myself
 “ at his feet. He embraced me;
 “ and, as nothing could be done to the
 “ woman, we left her; and, guarded by
 “ persons employed for that purpose, we
 “ pursued our way to Utrecht, where we
 “ arrived in safety. During our journey,
 “ I intreated my guardian not to think
 “ too hardly of me for this rash act.
 “ He said, I was forgiven both by my
 “ aunt and him, as they had found how
 “ treacherously I had been dealt with;
 “ and reflected that people of more experience
 “ than myself had been deceived
 “ by such artful creatures. After a short
 “ stay, we judged it necessary to return
 “ to England by the way of France.

“ We

“ We made several false tours on pur-
 “ pose to avoid any machinations of the
 “ wretches from whom I had escaped,
 “ but by too much care fell into their
 “ hands; for part of our guard, by a
 “ mistake in their directions, took a dif-
 “ ferent route from that which we pur-
 “ sued. Providence, however, sent the
 “ angelic Lord Belgrave to our assistance
 “ at a critical moment. But ought I,
 “ Madam, (said she, lifting up her fine
 “ dove-like eyes) to call that a misfor-
 “ tune, which has introduced me to the
 “ notice of the Belmont family, and your
 “ Ladyship in particular, and my god-
 “ like deliverer ?”

Thus the sweet girl ended her artless
 tale; and had you, my brother, seen her
 arrayed in unaffected innocence, and heard
 her tale, you would almost have adored
 her. But I ought to have told you, Mr.
 Marcel, the guardian, presented the young

officer a handsome gratuity, and promised him his future protection; and that he was gone for England with dispatches for Lady Cosway.

But the poor Frederick, how does he afflict himself for wounding Harriet's husband! Good heavens! thought I, had it been from any other hand, I could have kneeled down and kissed it. I would give up all my fortune, George, and even all female precedence, (and is not Lucy, as a woman, sincere if she says that?) to have Melmoth live but twelve months, and then break his neck the first time he goes to Newmarket, if he is not hanged before.

But it is time to conclude, and dispatch this monstrous packet. Let me see—one, two, three, four—ten sheets, as I hope to be an empress! But my father has been so good as to write to Cleveland-row,
that

that I may have an opportunity of sending as quick as winds and waves can carry the messenger.

LUCY TEMPLE.

P. S. I have just been with Belgrave, and read to him Miss Del Rio's narrative. He can only desire his kindest regards to the friend of his heart, and that you will not let Harriet know any thing of those transactions. Alas! he does not know that the dear creature is not in town, nor of the distresses she has been driven to; if he did, not our palace (as it is called) nor all V—— would hold him. I have only to beg that you will let Mr. and Mrs. Varenny, when you have perused it, see this long and uncommon account.— I inclose a letter for Rose Mount for your perusal.— My dear, for heaven's sake, if you can, go to Rose Mount to my suffering friend!

F 6 L E T T E R

L E T T E R L I X.

From the Same to the Same.

Dear GEORGE,

THIS moment I have received your's, and am in a state to be envied by none but a person going to be hanged: the contents have almost destroyed the small share of connected ideas that I possessed. Where is this same Mrs. B—t, whom you so properly call Mrs. *Blast*? Cannot you contrive to smuggle her to me? If you could, we would have her ducked in the Danube to wash away some of the poison of her tongue, and afterwards send her to work in the mines to purify her ideas; and, if all that did not answer the end, then she should go to a round tower in the forests of Siberia, and

L E T T E R L I X

vent

vent her scandal to the wolves and other beasts of prey that would howl nightly under her window; for their howlings, the voice Nature has given them, would be preferable to her horrid aspersions on the innocent. Poor Harriet! to be laid open to the venom of such a tongue! Where can the dear creature be fled to? Why do you not inquire who this Mrs. Mountney is, and what is her general character? Oh! that I had wings, instead of arms! I would have been with you long ere now, and no place should have concealed my friend from me. Pardon my impatience, Mulcester, and do not again blame my sex for the failings of a few. You, at least, are sensible that women can be capable of friendship; and is not that the noblest sensation, next to the adoration due to the Sovereign Disposer of all things, that our finite minds are capable of feeling?

As

As for scandal and defamation, those devilish vices can only find room in devilish minds. It is a certain sign of an ill heart to be inclined to defamation; they who are harmless and innocent can have no gratification that way: but it ever arises from a neglect of what is laudable in one's self, and an impatience of seeing it in another; else why should beauty and virtue provoke its severest attacks?

Belgrave is very ill, but more from anxiety of mind than from any fixed disorder of body: the physicians, not knowing what name to give it, call it a fever on the spirits. He is as weak as an infant, and I do not believe could, without help, move from his chamber. My little amiable Spaniard is his constant attendant; she watches over him with a sister's affection. Heaven only knows how all these things will end. My heart is
torn

torn with suspense, the most grievous of all evils.

Why do you not mention Charles? where is he? His infamous wife is now at Cambray with Mr. Melmoth, and his wicked colleague Sir James. She is the *English woman of quality*, whom the young officer so justly termed a vile adulteress.

But I have the pleasure to acquaint you (for your friend's sake I call it a pleasure) that Melmoth is out of danger, as is Mr. Marcel; but the latter is unable to travel. Lord Belgrave is at liberty; but a liberty he is not able at present to make use of. Forward to me, as soon as possible, some account of my friend; for my heart labours with impatience. Adieu, my brother! None but such as feel in the most exquisite degree, can paint the pains of mind which now torture

Your affectionate

LUCY TEMPLE.

L E T T E R L X.

Lord MULCESTER to Lady L. TEMPLE.

I WISH, my sister, I could obey your commands; but no accounts of your poor friend can I hear, that will give you comfort. Oh! the poor fallen angel! for surely she as nearly resembled angels, both in person and mind, as any thing human could do.—But let me begin where I left off: I went, as I proposed, to Newbury, and easily found out the house of the Mrs. or Miss Spencer. I was without an attendant, for prudential reasons, which you may guess. I asked for the lady of the mansion, where I saw a very genteel woman, as to outward appearance. I inquired if Mrs. Melmoth was there? She readily answered, Yes; but she was sick in bed. I begged my respects,

respects, and sent up my name, saying I wished that I could be permitted to see her for a few minutes. Miss Spencer went up; but returning, she answered, that Mrs. Melmoth was too ill to speak with any one. "What! not to Lord "Mulcester?" (said I with an emphasis.) "No, Sir, (said she) not even to you." I was quite disconcerted, and directly returned to Newbury. By the way I reasoned with myself: Perhaps (said I) she might be fearful it should be some of Melmoth's emissaries on a feigned pretence. I then wished I had sent up my name in writing. But, on my arrival at the inn, I inquired more minutely into the character of Miss Spencer; when I was informed, to my heart-felt grief, that Miss Spencer was a discarded mistress of Sir Charles Barham's; and that she had come down and taken that house, and brought with her a young lady who was kept by a French nobleman, and who indeed

indeed was mistress of the house more properly, as every thing was done by her direction, and all the servants were at her command; and that she had frequently been there on a market-day, and the nobleman with her; that he was very fond of her; and no wonder, as she was very handsome; but that the lady had been very ill. I was afflicted beyond any thing you can imagine: for a fall from virtue, in such a character as Mrs. Melmoth's, what a triumph to the dissolute of both sexes!—And yet it cannot be: there are so many excellencies in the poor fugitive, that it must be misrepresentation. I am bewildered with thought—the people are so positive in their assertions, yet the general tenor of her life is so contrary to those assertions. But her refusal to see me, the brother of her dearest friend, and one who valued her so much himself, has more weight with me than any thing that is said. Does it imply she was conscious
of

of something wrong, and did not wish to see me? To leave nothing undone, I wrote to her from the inn at Newbury, and returned to town with a heavy heart, having received for answer, that she would write to me within a few days. In this matter an indifferent person would be led to conclude that there could be no artifice, as the woman *acknowledged* that Mrs. Melmoth was in the house; a circumstance which, had that lady been detained by force or fraud, it is to be supposed that she would have denied.

I went the next day to Windsor, where I waited, having left proper directions, and hoping that Mrs. Melmoth might by that time have thought proper to write to me; but was informed that Mr. and Mrs. Varenny had sent three several messages for me, intreating to see me. Without changing my riding-dress, I waited on them, and was informed that Mrs. Mountney

ney had been there, and in the tenderest terms desired Mrs. Varenny, if she had any regard for the poor fallen Mrs. Melmoth, (as she termed her) to take her from the hands she was in; saying, that she had treated her with the utmost respect and tenderness, and, in order to keep her from Melmoth, had been at the pains to change her habitation, and removed to the borders of Hampshire; but by some accident she became acquainted with a French nobleman, the Duke de R——, and with him she was gone, under pretence of going to Lisbon to Lord Eastmain: but Mrs. Mountney believes this to be merely pretence, and apprehends they are somewhere in the neighbourhood of Southampton, and, as the Duke's equipage is so remarkable, thinks we might easily trace them. She gave this account with tears to Mrs. Varenny, who describes her as a lovely woman.

We

We are all unhappy, as you may well suppose; for this intelligence cannot, I think, be doubted. And yet, for so amiable a person to plunge at once headlong into vice, is almost beyond belief. Mrs. Varenny, all goodness as she is, suspends her judgment till farther lights are thrown on this strange affair; but thinks she ought to have seen me, had she been in the last agonies. Notwithstanding these obstacles, I set out once more for Newbury, and saw the before-said Miss Spencer, who told me that Mrs. Melmoth was gone from her, and had put herself under the protection of the Duke de R——; but whether they were gone was uncertain. She called a servant, who told me they proposed going to Portsmouth, and from thence for Lisbon. I must own, this gave me a glimpse of hope that Harriet had withdrawn herself from that woman thro' disgust, and might possibly have put herself under the Duke's protection to conduct

duct her to her brother's. Faint as this hope was, I crossed the country to Rose Mount, and there saw a scene of desolation. How unlike the elegant place it once was! A melancholy idea struck me in comparing this beautiful seat, deprived of its greatest beauty, to its once lovely mistress, now robbed of her greatest ornament, her innocence.—Yet it certainly cannot be.—No tidings, however, at this place of Harriet: but Peregrine was gone into the rules of the King's Bench. From Rose Mount I went to London, and thence to the King's Bench, thinking perchance she might have fled to her brother, who now is there: but he had not heard of her since she left the country, and indeed was so stupid with drink, that I could not get a rational answer from him. Thus unsuccessful, I returned home, and there found poor Jenny ready to break her heart; for she had heard those reports. Jenny will by no means listen to them.

She

She says, she is sure it is a contrivance of Mr. Melmoth's to get her mistress in his power, and that she dares to say they have put her into a nunnery. I think Jenny in some respects has judged properly: it is a thought that neither struck me, nor Mrs. Varenny. And now, my dear Lucy, you must exert yourself to make proper inquiries: the Marquis will assist you. How rejoiced shall I be, if you can find her! no matter where, so she is but innocent. Belgrave, if you can help it, must not be made acquainted with it; for, if he hears those dreadful tales, he will be reduced to a state that will deprive him of reason. Unhappy youth! and much more unhappy Harriet! whether you are, or are not innocent. But to Providence must I leave the event; and I doubt not but you offer up to Heaven your prayers, with

Your affectionate brother's,

G. MULCESTER.

L E T T E R L X I.

From the Same to the Same.

Dear Lucy,

PARDON the abrupt conclusion of my former letter. I was so fatigued and so ill on account of my journies, that I was obliged to take to my bed. Yesterday a mail was dispatched for Lisbon. In my bed I wrote to Lord Eastmain, and once more intreated him, if he had any regard for his once-loved niece, to return with all speed to England. I have made the best of matters to him: but lawyers, brokers, &c. have given him a full account of his nephew. — I am far from being well, Lucy; therefore cannot be so explicit as I could wish. Ask me not why I did not mention Charles: I could not do it with honour to him. He

is in the country with some woman. He at first seemed much affected; but he bears it now with an heroic fortitude, and is solacing himself with his favourite.

Adieu, Lucy! I am not well in health,
but

Your faithful friend,

and obliged brother,

G. MULCESTER.

L E T T E R LXII.

Lady LUCY TEMPLE to Mrs. VARENY.

My dear MADAM,

IN the phrenzy of my soul I write! —
To whom can I apply but to you,
who are goodness itself? Oh! Madam,

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you

you are now (if you will allow me the name) my only friend. My better half is torn from me, and by what means I cannot tell. Do you, Madam, endeavour to find her out for me. In a word, Madam, I look upon it to be the cause of virtue, and, as such, the cause of Heaven. The honour of our sex is concerned in Harriet's restoration. Lord Mulcester has done what man can do; but a female may perhaps have more influence. I would immediately set out for England, but that my dear father is again afflicted with the gout, and her Ladyship is extremely ill with the unhappy effects of Charles's marriage: they now again wish he had married the meanest creature, if she had but come of honest parentage, and had been virtuous. Lord Belgrave is also extremely ill. Some officious person has informed his Lordship of the reports spread to Mrs. Melmoth's disadvantage; in consequence of which

which we are obliged to confine him like a state prisoner; but he is not at all times sensible, and when any restraint is used, it is attributed to his disorder. But here is a new affliction: the amiable Miss Del Rio is making the most grateful return she can to her deliverer, which is her heart; she is not conscious of this, altho' I am sure of it, and so is Belgrave, who wishes her far from him a hundred times a day. He does not say any thing; but, like myself, his eyes are great tatlers on any occasion wherein the heart is concerned. I cannot, I will not believe my Harriet could swerve from virtue; but suppose it possible that a mind like her's could not persist in it—and shall we not receive a poor, fallen, penitent sister, who had erred, and wished to return back to the paths of virtue? Remember the example of our Blessed Master and his most pious penitent: remember the sweet Mrs. Rowe's description of her. Not that I

can or will allow myself to suppose, except I had ocular demonstration, that Harriet can be comprehended in the character alluded to. But where can the sweet sufferer be? Perhaps she is fallen a prey to some brutal wretch, who is sporting with her calamities: if so, no wonder none of her letters reached me; for I make no doubt but she has written: but it is the interest of the creatures who detain her to keep her from all intercourse with her friends. If I were in England, I would endeavour to see this Duke de R——; and perhaps something might be gathered from him. Pardon this incoherent scrawl: I write at random, as the thoughts flow. I should be unworthy of Harriet's friendship, if I could at this time be tranquil. Do not, Madam, hint any thing to Lord Mulcester of Miss Del Rio's affection for Lord Belgrave. The lordly sex has enjoyed triumph enough already, and George has made very free
with

with his reflections on us poor women. Poor Miss Del Rio, I foresee, will be a victim to hopeless love; for Belgrave's whole soul is filled with the idea of Harriet. Adieu, Madam! May God preserve you and your husband, with your faultless children, prays

LUCY TEMPLE.

The Earl and Countess join with me and Lord Belgrave in respectful compliments.

LETTER LXIII.

Lady L. TEMPLE to Lord MULCESTER.

Dear GEORGE,

UNavailing are our efforts to find out the dear creature. Every invention has been made use of, but to no purpose. She certainly is not in this part of the world. The Marquis has been indefatigable in his inquiries in person; has employed all his interest and friends: but no one that answers any such description can be found. Melmoth and his infamous companions are gone to Nice. Mr. Marcel arrived here last night, but with much difficulty; is now obliged to keep his room. The spirit of a true English merchant shews itself in this old gentleman. He has presented the Countess with a most superb piece of gilt plate in
the

the shape of a cabinet, but so contrived that it will answer the end of a complete toilette. To the Marquis he has given, as a mark of his gratitude, an English watch of great value; but says he has reserved for Lord Belgrave an inestimable jewel. Cannot you guess, George, what this jewel is? But that will never do; for Lord Belgrave, were his heart at liberty, is too delicate to accept a woman who had entertained the most distant inclination for another.——I am asked for.—As I live, George, a card from Lady Cosway: she remains at an *bôtel* till she hears from us. The Marquis and Susannah are gone in one of our coaches to conduct her hither.



I HAVE been to wait on her Ladyship: she is now with my mother; in great affliction at her son's imprudent match,

and the more so, as she supposes, when he comes of age, he will turn her from the mansion-house, as she has had several very insolent letters from him, *demanding* money: that Sir Charles was now, in every sense of the word, a brother; for, through the means of the young officer, he had discovered something against the woman he kept, of such a nature as had made him discard her with great disgrace, though he did not mention of what nature: (Perhaps through fear, as she had once such an influence over him.) The young man above-mentioned staid at Cosway Hall but a few hours, and then set off for London, saying he had a person in distress to relieve: that on the first news of Miss Del Rio's being gone, her Ladyship had spoken very warmly to Mrs. Conway, who repented it so much, that she never again came to the Hall, and had entirely quitted Derby. Do not suppose me to be ill-natured, brother,

but

but I think those people's punishment, in the marriage of their son and nephew, exemplary; for what unjustifiable means did they take to secure the dross in their own family? — But this is foreign: I can scarce think of any thing but my poor lost Harriet; her distresses fill my head and my heart. Poor Belgrave, too, he is very ill. I wish you was here: and yet I would not wish you to leave England, till the dear fugitive is found.

Adieu! I am now, as ever,

Your affectionate

L. TEMPLE.

L E T T E R LXIV.

Mrs. VARENY to Lady LUCY TEMPLE.

IF I had not been honoured with your commands, dear Lady Lucy, my affection for Mrs. Melmoth would have prompted me to do every thing in my power towards seeking her out. I have used all possible means, but in vain. Were she my own child, I could not take more pains to clear her from the aspersions thrown on her. But I am sorry that I must join with Lord Mulcester in observing that defamation is a female vice; for, were you to see with what avidity these reports are listened to in the female circles, you would almost wish yourself any thing but a woman. Lord B. and his sister have been warm advocates for Harriet. Lady S—— told Lady C—— F——, who

who had been insinuating some reports about our friend, that granting what was said to be true in some degree, let each present lay her hand on her heart, and answer if there were no fault. “ Your
 “ Ladyship in particular (said she) ought
 “ to be silent, because it sets people to
 “ making retrospections, not to the honour of your own family.” You know undoubtedly the two glaring instances Lady S—— alluded to. This, instead of an answer, produced a general silence; and I dare say nothing more will be said, where Lady S——, Lord B. or I chance to be present. But this I am sorry to say, that Mrs. Melmoth’s fame probably will never be so fair in indifferent eyes again, as it was before this accident; the world, as it is called, in general being much more fond of believing evil reports than good. The unhappy never want enemies; and, where the ear is open to accusations, accusers will never be wanting.

Oh! Lady Lucy, you do not know the pangs this false step of my friend has given me. I feel as a mother; and when I look at my own girls, can I, with all a fond mother's wishes, think them more deserving than poor Mrs. Melmoth? And yet you see how her amiable qualities have been blasted. How pregnant with sorrow are those reflections to a mother! — Lady Harman, to her shame, and Mrs. Blast, have been particularly busy on this occasion.

I wish I could give you any comfort; but the mystery seems to thicken, instead of clearing up. I wish she would at least be visible: her not appearing gives her a guilty look. On this you may depend, I will once more endeavour to find her; and, if she proves innocent, I will take her under my own protection, in spite of Melmoth, till her uncle's arrival; and even if otherwise, as she is not, cannot
be

be abandoned to vice, I will endeavour to place her above the reach of temptation. Lord Mulcester begs I would inform you that he is not able to write at present, having a violent disorder in his head; but hopes to be better by the time an answer could come from Lisbon.

My dear Lady Lucy,

Believe me your's sincerely,

E. VARENY.

My most grateful respects attend your noble parents and Lord Belgrave.

LETTER

L E T T E R L X V.

Lady S——N to Lady Lucy Temple.

Dear MADAM,

A T my brother's request I write a few lines, by way of passport to the inclosed, that I know will be agreeable to you, as it will clear some doubts which have arisen concerning a lady who is so dear to you as Mrs. Melmoth.—Lord B. has taken true pains to come at particulars, and is now as busy as a justice of peace in taking notes and memorandums. Excuse me from writing more at present; for I am in a situation that excuses indolence, if it ever can be excused; but is so fearful and so diffident, a certain sign of true love, that occasioned this scrawl from

Your affectionate and obliged friend,

CAROLINE S——N.

LETTER LXVI.

Lord B—— to Lady Lucy Temple.

MADAM,

AS any thing that concerns Lady Lucy cannot be indifferent to me, you will not wonder that I should interest myself in Mrs. Melmoth's welfare: nor indeed could I be indifferent to her on her own account; for I truly revere her, and have been stung to the heart at her sufferings, and at the censures of an ill-natured world on unavoidable accidents, that could only be judged of, except by the parties concerned, by the event.

With contrition I own I have been but too much acquainted with bad men and bad women.—Mr. Melmoth, Madam, you are convinced, is totally abandoned; therefore

therefore no wonder if he should employ his vile agents to blacken and traduce a virtue they could not overcome. The moment I heard the name of Sir Charles Barham's cast-off mistress, I was certain some horrid invention had been set on foot to trepan Mrs. Melmoth. I set several persons at work, but to no purpose, till I went to Newbury myself: but Miss Spencer would not see me (perhaps guessing that I was too well acquainted with their arts); for you cannot conceive, nor does the public know, what villainies are committed upon innocent creatures drawn into their snares. At length one of the servants, by a never-failing application, told me he himself knew nothing, but added, that, if I could find out one Captain Conway, he might inform me. On this slight information I was determined to return to town, and inquire at the coffee-houses, &c. for this Captain. But at an inn at Reading, where I stopped

to

to dine, I saw a basket brought to beg the broken victuals for the prisoners, and at the same time to solicit my charity. Whilst my dinner was preparing, I thought I would go and see those objects of compassion. — Surely Providence inspired me with the thought! — In walking round the dreadful mansion, I saw, in what is called a yard or garden, a young gentleman whose face I recollected to have seen before, and, supposing him in great distress, I asked him if he would favour me with his company to drink a glass of wine? which offer he accepted. With the utmost delicacy I was capable of, I begged to know the cause of his confinement. He told me he was there for debt, at the suit of a bad woman, to whom he was not indebted, if the truth could be searched into. On a little further inquiry I found he was the very Captain Conway I was in search of. On my proposal of restoring his liberty, he gave me the following ac-

court

count of himself, which I submit, Madam, to your judgment; and do not doubt but you will join with me in admiring that Providence, which has brought this black scene to light, and by the means of one who to common minds might appear so little interested in it.

“ I am, Sir, (said Captain Conway)
 “ a person of no mean family; but hap-
 “ pening to fall into the snares of one
 “ who is the most beautiful and artful of
 “ her sex, on this woman, whose real
 “ name is Isabella Egerton, I lavished
 “ my paternal fortune. I really loved
 “ her tenderly, and it was a long time
 “ before my eyes were open to her vices;
 “ for she is capable of deceiving much
 “ more sensible men than I am. At
 “ length I had so involved myself, that
 “ I was obliged to depend on her, and,
 “ in consequence, very often to act against
 “ the dictates of my conscience: but,
 “ like

“ like a second Circe, she enchanted all
 “ my senses. Many, many artifices has
 “ she practised: the scheme for entrap-
 “ ping Miss Del Rio was her's, for which
 “ Sir James Hazzeldine gave her a bond
 “ of three thousand pounds, to be paid
 “ when he was married to that young
 “ lady; and a Mrs. Harris of D——
 “ had a bond for a thousand, to be paid
 “ on the same account; for which gra-
 “ tuity she personated Sir James's sister,
 “ as her daughter did a distant relation.
 “ Mrs. Harris said, she thought herself
 “ bound to help Sir James to a wife, as
 “ he had helped her daughter to a hus-
 “ band. Miss Egerton (Mrs. Conway,
 “ as she was then called) was not present:
 “ she was too cunning to lay herself open
 “ to the reach of the law; yet she guided
 “ the measures; and Lady Anne (whom
 “ we call Lady Charles) was too good a
 “ second to her. When I found they
 “ were all determined on the young lady's
 “ ruin,

“ ruin, shocked at the thoughts of their
 “ intended brutality, I could bear their
 “ wickedness no longer, and discovered
 “ it, as I suppose your Lordship has
 “ heard: but, to this hour, my infamous
 “ accomplices do not know that I gave
 “ the information, but think I was taken
 “ up on suspicion, and obliged to dis-
 “ cover something.

“ A deep-concerted scheme this was;
 “ but that against poor Mrs. Melmoth
 “ was still deeper, and the infernal Isa-
 “ bella and Mr. Melmoth at the bottom
 “ of it. My conscience was awakened
 “ at her sufferings. I did not doubt but,
 “ if art failed, force would be used; for
 “ the Duke de R—— was passionately
 “ fond of her, and Melmoth at any rate
 “ to be divorced, that he might, if pos-
 “ sible, contrive to marry Lady Anne:
 “ that Mrs. Melmoth was quite ignorant
 “ of the real characters of the persons
 “ whose

“ whose hands she was in, and a great
 “ deal of art had been used to get her
 “ into their power. I was resolved to
 “ extricate her at the hazard of my life,
 “ which I have effected, although I have
 “ lost my liberty by it: for, notwith-
 “ standing the fatigues of my journey
 “ from Germany, I went, almost without
 “ food or rest, to Miss Spencer’s, and
 “ warned Mrs. Melmoth of her danger,
 “ and helped her to escape from the
 “ garden-gate, after the family were in
 “ bed, and went with her to the first
 “ stage; where I left her, and returned
 “ without suspicion. The wretches were
 “ outrageous at her escape; and Isabella
 “ was dispatched to place her going-off
 “ in the blackest light. But when they
 “ found, by inquiries at Basingstoke, that
 “ I had been there with her, I was fol-
 “ lowed to this town, and arrested at the
 “ suit of Miss Egerton.”

I was

I was in hopes he could have informed me of the place Mrs. Melmoth intended to go to: but he assured me he did not know, nor had he seen or heard from her since; that she said to him at parting, "Virtue is its own reward, Sir; and I trust I shall have it in my power one day to shew my gratitude, but at present I am poor myself." And well might she say so, when she had nothing with her but some linen in her pocket, and her watch; for the principal part of her clothes were left at the infamous Spencer's. I am overjoyed at her escape, as I know how much pleasure it will give you; for your dear self, or the incomparable sufferer, cannot be thoroughly unhappy, as she is innocent, and out of the reach of her intended destroyers. As a reward for Mr. Conway's fidelity to Mrs. Melmoth, I promised to find out Isabella, and to procure him his liberty. It happened unlucky for him, that Lady
 Cofway

Cosway was abroad, and Sir Charles Barham ill, or he would have been released ere now; and then he purposed to wait on Lord Mulcester. But this fortunate meeting has been equally as propitious; for it might have been some weeks before he was at liberty. He is a fine young man, and I hope will now be an useful ornament to society.

I returned to town, and waited on Lord Mulcester, whose disorder will not yet permit him to write; and he did not choose to entrust his secretary with those things; therefore begged I would forward this account to you as soon as possible. Lord R—— has just sent to let me know that a courier is going off to your noble father; therefore I have only time to say, that I am, with the most profound respect and sincere affection,

B——.

LETTER

L E T T E R LXVII.

From the Same to the Same.

MADAM,

I FLATTER myself you will not be displeased (as Lord Mulcester is not yet able to write) to hear that I have found out Isabella. This extraordinary woman sent me a note the day before yesterday, begging me to call on her, but not to let it be known where she resided, as her affairs required great privacy. I went to her immediately. Never did I see such a blaze of charms. No wonder poor Conway, and so many men have been taken in with her. Had I not been well acquainted with her character, I should have thought her an embodied angel. I understand she is under great apprehensions of the officers
of

of justice, who are in quest of her and Miss Spencer, for bank-notes to a considerable amount, which Spencer robbed Sir Charles Barham of, and Isabella received and offered to change. She told me, if I would extricate her from this danger, she would tell me all she knew concerning Mrs. Melmoth; and, to let me see she was sincere, she would relate to me the history of her life. Permit me, Madam, to lay the history of this second Roxana before you, as nearly as I [can remember, in her own words :

“ My father, Sir, (said she) was an
 “ eminent attorney. I lost my mother
 “ in my infancy. My father had me
 “ educated in the most expensive manner.
 “ Tutors of all sorts constantly attended
 “ me at home. A daughter of the first
 “ Peer of the realm could not be sup-
 “ ported in greater state than I was.
 “ Indeed our whole course of living was
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“ with a splendor which by no means
 “ suited our station or circumstances;
 “ my father trusting to repair all by a
 “ marriage, which, by my person and
 “ accomplishments, he did not doubt
 “ would be very advantageous. But no
 “ such match offering, and his affairs
 “ requiring immediate assistance, and so
 “ there was but money to keep up a
 “ splendid appearance, no matter how it
 “ was obtained; he therefore bargained
 “ with Lord F—— to dispose of me for
 “ an annuity, and a considerable sum in
 “ ready cash, to his Lordship. I had no
 “ real notions of virtue instilled into me:
 “ pride and common decorum were all
 “ my governess endeavoured to inculcate;
 “ my father often telling me, that, if I
 “ had but money, and could appear ele-
 “ gant, I should always meet with respect
 “ from the world; whereas, on the con-
 “ trary, if I wanted those requisites, the
 “ most virtuous would not countenance
 “ me,

“ me, however deserving I might be.
 “ My small experience in life, though I
 “ was then but sixteen, had taught me
 “ to observe, virtuous poverty was not
 “ so much carested as sumptuous vice:
 “ witness women of infamous lives in the
 “ playhouse, who were carested and coun-
 “ tenanced by people of fashion of both
 “ sexes, and the attention paid even to
 “ prostitutes in public; when virtuous
 “ women, as they are called, are neg-
 “ lected. No wonder that a young crea-
 “ ture like me, inured to pomp and
 “ vanity, should forfeit what she was
 “ never taught to prize, to dress, jewels,
 “ and equipage. I consented, and was
 “ conducted by my father to Paris, where
 “ his Lordship received me with rapture;
 “ and we made the tour of Europe, as it
 “ is called. I amassed a great deal of
 “ money and jewels whilst I remained
 “ with him: but, soon after our return
 “ to England, his Lordship married, and

“ I once more flourished away for a husband of consequence; for the real cause of my going from England was not even guessed at. I was supposed to be on a visit to a sister of my father’s in Ireland. During this interval I became acquainted with Captain Conway, and had really as much regard for him as it was possible for such a heart as mine to feel. I must do him the justice to say, I believe his heart was then untainted with vice. As I had sacrificed myself to oblige my father once, I chose Conway to please myself. He spent a great part of his fortune on me; but it would not support me in my common expences and card-money. Well, another and another succeeded. In the spoils of all my father shared: nor did I once feel real remorse for what some would call guilt; for had not man made a prey of me, and had not I a right to make a prey of man?

“ Thus

“ Thus I reasoned. — At length Mr.
 “ Melmoth came in my way, just re-
 “ turned from his travels. He was struck
 “ with me — No wonder; it was the
 “ fashion to admire me then: and my
 “ father pretended to keep me so strict,
 “ and was so careful to conduct me to all
 “ public places himself, that my chastity
 “ was not suspected. Melmoth laid close
 “ siege to me. He was the very person
 “ we could have wished for — young, a
 “ great deal of money in possession, and
 “ a large estate in reversion: but he never
 “ mentioned marriage; and my father,
 “ before he had time to bring a scheme
 “ to bear to entrap him in that snare,
 “ died. I was now destitute, except in
 “ jewels and clothes, the former of which
 “ I placed in a banker’s hands, and pre-
 “ tended to Mr. Melmoth, who was
 “ more assiduous than ever, that my
 “ father had disposed of them; for which,
 “ when my transitory mourning was out,

“ I got a new fet: for, making a merit
 “ of necessity, I surrendered to him after
 “ a conditional agreement was signed to
 “ marry me when his uncle died; which
 “ he has since found means, basely enough,
 “ to steal from me; although I did not
 “ value his agreement, nor would marry
 “ him if I could: but, from that hour
 “ to this, I have accused him of being
 “ my first seducer, and, artful as he is,
 “ he believes it. You see how open I
 “ am, Sir: but I now defy the world,
 “ and the world’s censures; and, were I
 “ clear of the consequences of Nancy
 “ Spencer’s bank-notes, I would go to
 “ Rome, and spend the residue of my
 “ days: for you know it is become the
 “ mode, when women of my cast have
 “ accumulated money by means obnox-
 “ ious to rebuke in their own country,
 “ to retire to Romē. — But, not to in-
 “ trude on your Lordship’s patience: —
 “ Whilst I was in Paris with Mr. Mel-
 “ moth,

“ moth, I became acquainted with Lord
 “ Charles Temple, and gained some con-
 “ siderable sums from him, persuading
 “ him I was come to Paris under Mr.
 “ Melmoth’s protection, to get in some
 “ money due to my father’s estate; a
 “ circumstance not to be wondered at,
 “ as my father and he were so intimate.
 “ From thence I proceeded to Italy with
 “ Melmoth; and, he beginning to cool
 “ in his affections, I looked round for a
 “ future paramour, and at the carnival
 “ saw Lord Belgrave. I was much struck
 “ with his person; as what woman is not?
 “ But hearing his general character for
 “ morality, and such stuff, I knew I must
 “ wear the mask of virtue and exemplary
 “ goodness to attract him; and, could I
 “ once gain his notice, I thought my
 “ point gained: for which reason I quar-
 “ relled with Melmoth, and quitted him
 “ at Mantua. I dressed myself as a
 “ widow, and, by a manœuvre, not only

“ attracted his notice, but the sagacious
 “ Lord Mulcester’s also. I was not with-
 “ out hopes that I might be Lady Bel-
 “ grave, if I could once fascinate him so
 “ far as to attempt my honour: I was
 “ then sure, from his principles, I should
 “ gain him. But you shall hear how I
 “ was foiled: I went to England elate
 “ with hope: I took a little cottage, and
 “ adorned it in a most romantic taste;
 “ furnished it with the best authors, and
 “ every thing calculated to please such a
 “ mind as Lord Belgrave’s. In this place
 “ I first saw Miss Villars, now Mrs. Mel-
 “ moth. She was charmed with my little
 “ elegant retreat, and wished an acquaint-
 “ ance with the mistress of it; a sure
 “ sign of success, I thought, if she ap-
 “ proved my person and manners: and
 “ I would have cultivated her acquaint-
 “ ance, as the notice of a person of her
 “ rank and character might have been of
 “ great service to me in my design on
 “ Lord

“ Lord Belgrave; but was obliged to
 “ decline it, lest, on nearer interviews,
 “ she should perceive what I then wished
 “ to conceal. I thought her, as Miss
 “ Villars, a sweet creature, and disliked
 “ her for nothing but for being more
 “ virtuous and innocent than myself:
 “ but, when I heard she was married to
 “ Melmoth, altho’ I despised the man,
 “ I could not bear she should bear his
 “ name, and see her flourish away at
 “ court, at the play, &c. whilst I was
 “ obliged to keep such an humble di-
 “ stance. But, when I found it was her
 “ cursed charms that deprived me of
 “ Belgrave, I vowed revenge; for which
 “ reason I joined more heartily with
 “ Melmoth in all his schemes, and got
 “ her into my power, and make no doubt
 “ but I should have humbled her, had it
 “ not been for that officious apostate,
 “ Tom Conway. But, to do her justice,
 “ she behaved becoming the character she

“ assumed — very obstinate, and very vir-
 “ tuous; for nothing but force could have
 “ prevailed with her, although I believe
 “ the Duke would have married her, had
 “ she been at liberty, he was so infatuated
 “ with her. And yet I see nothing so
 “ very extraordinary in her — A baby
 “ face — no life, no airs. Had she not
 “ got off as she did, not all her virtue
 “ could have saved her, Melmoth being
 “ determined to be divorced from her,
 “ but for a trick, which I did not know
 “ till last week, that Sir James and his
 “ crew have served me. I will let you
 “ into all their schemes. As for Tom
 “ Conway, he should not have betrayed
 “ us; for I have supported him these
 “ three years past: nor indeed should I
 “ have arrested him but from revenge.
 “ The Duke de R — is raving for the
 “ loss of *his* Harriet, as he called her.
 “ It is amazing to me where she can be
 “ concealed; for I stopped all her letters

“ to

“ to Lady Lucy, except one, which was
 “ forwarded from Mrs. Mountney’s
 “ (whom I suppose you guess to be your
 “ humble servant): indeed, once I was
 “ so kind as to write *for* Lady Lucy,
 “ and forbid her the trouble of a cor-
 “ respondence, as I (Lady Lucy) did not
 “ choose, after her imprudent conduct,
 “ to have any correspondence with her.
 “ And now, my Lord, I have told you
 “ the whole truth. If I can serve Mrs.
 “ Melmoth, I will; not from love, as
 “ I told you before, but from revenge.
 “ Nor do you have a better opinion of
 “ Conway than you have of me: for it
 “ certainly cannot be virtue for virtue’s
 “ sake, which has induced him to this;
 “ but love for Del Rio, or some such
 “ motive. However, I will perform my
 “ promise: if I can get clear of this
 “ vexatious affair, I will put my money
 “ into the bank of Holland, and retire
 “ to Rome.”

Thus, Madam, this strange creature ended her narrative. Such a mixture of good sense and impiety I never, in the course of my connections with man or woman, met with. How much is it to be regretted, that such an education, and such talents, should be so much abused! and become now her punishment and curse, when they might have been a blessing! I hope she will keep her resolution of going to Rome, that England may be quit of such an intriguing spirit. She dismissed the action against Conway at the first word. I expect him in town this evening. Mrs. Melmoth's trunks, she left at Spencer's, were, by Isabella's direction, brought to Lord Mulcester's last night. His Lordship has undertaken to settle matters with Sir Charles, that these women may be suffered to quit the country. I purpose to send Captain Conway in search of Mrs. Melmoth. I will keep a messenger in waiting, on purpose
to

to send the first moment I have the happiness to hear of her. I hope, Madam, you will approve of what I have done: I shall be careless of what the world will think or say; for I am, and ever will be,

MADAM,

Your devoted servant,

B——.

P. S. I have the pleasure to inform you, by a message which is just brought from your brother, that Lord Eastmain is arrived at Plymouth, where he stays a few days to recover the fatigues of his voyage.

LETTER

LETTER LXVIII.

Lady L. TEMPLE to Lord MULCESTER.

My dear GEORGE,

LANGUAGE cannot convey the joy I felt at hearing of my Harriet's escape from the wretches who had decoyed her : but that joy subsided when I thought what harms might yet await her. Alone, unattended, without money, without friends, how my heart bleeds for her ! If she should fall into the hands of those horrid creatures again—I am almost distracted at the thoughts of it :—yet sure such piety, such goodness will be the care of Providence ! Her heart must be almost broken with that forged letter.—What does not that Isabella deserve ? Oh ! that I had the punishing her ! but the worm
that

that never dies, her conscience, will be punishment enough for her. I can neither eat nor rest till I hear the result of Conway's search. Do, make him a present for me: I suppose the young fellow's finances are very low. I rejoice to hear Lord Eastmain is arrived. I hope he will see justice done to his favourite: and she will certainly emerge from the place of her concealment. And now, altho' last, yet not the least thought of, I speak of Lord B.'s goodness, in the pains he has taken, and continues to take, on my friend's account. Tell him how much I think myself obliged to him, and that I approve of every step he has taken. I shall write to Lady S—— by the next packet.——And now I must inform you of a kind of a tragi-comedy we have acting here: it is not quite deep enough for *Love lies a Bleeding*; it is very near. Mr. Marcel is so much taken, as I told you before, with our disconsolate Lord, that the

secret

secret of "the jewel" is come out, and he wishes to bestow his charge on his Lordship, and promises to make such large additions to her fortune, as would tempt a man who does not know the right use of riches so well as Lord Belgrave. Lady Cosway is likewise so desirous of an alliance, that, sooner than fail, I believe she would have him herself. Sufannah is far from being displeased at the proposal; but would be terribly chagrined, did she know that she is refused. The old gentleman got my mother to mention it to Lord Belgrave; but his Lordship's first plea against it was religion: but that, he was given to understand, would be no objection, as he might easily lead such a ductile mind as Miss Del Rio's. Then his Lordship was obliged in plain terms to declare, he had a material reason for continuing in the single state. And here the matter rests. Were you to see how fearful his Lordship is of coming where
the

the young lady is, (lest she should ask the question, I suppose)—Oh! you men, the best of you, are not without your vanities.—He has had the pleasure to refuse her, it is true; but remember it was her guardian and aunt's proposal. I cannot say I ever saw Lord Belgrave behave so ungraciously; and I fancy, on recollection, he thinks so: for true generosity, like true delicacy, is much more hurt by an offence from itself, than to itself. He has shut himself into his chamber for these three days, and no one has had admittance but me: but I, you know, carry all before me.—Adieu, George! I would fain be chearful; but, with all my levity, I must and shall, till Harriet is found, still remain

Your disconsolate

LUCY TEMPLE.

LETTER

LETTER LXIX.

LORD BELGRAVE TO LORD MULCESTER.

ONCE more, my dear Mulcester, my tormentors the physicians have permitted me the use of pen and paper. What business had I with physicians? Can they heal the bosom's keen smart? Oh! my friend, you told me I might have trouble even from good women:—indeed I have. Miss Del Rio's guardian and aunt have looked on me with partial eyes, and have made me an offer of the young lady, with a most splendid fortune. She is certainly an amiable creature: but can any one be put in competition with my unhappy noble-minded friend? I am not, I see I am not indifferent to her: but suppose my mind had been quite at liberty, Miss Del Rio could never be Belgrave's wife.

wife. Religion out of the question, remember Sir James Hazzeldine, which speaks her a woman susceptible of impressions; although I believe her mind as pure as a Vestal's. I would quit V——, but am detained by your worthy sister. What her reason can be for this detention, I cannot say; but I am sure Lady Lucy's motives must be good.—My health, my dear Mulcester, is much impaired. My family, as you know, are subject to declines: if I am thus early cut off, may I not escape the snares too often laid out for unwary youth? As I hope our friendship is made for immortality, my first quitting the stage will be only like taking a journey or voyage where you could not get a passage so quick as myself; but will follow me to the destined place. I would come to England, and repose my cares in your faithful bosom, but I fear to meet Melmoth. Undoubtedly that lawless man would think himself bound, by what the world

world calls honour, to challenge me; and I, if I pay any regard to the tyrant custom, must not refuse to meet him: and yet custom without reason is but ancient error. But there are two sorts of persons, you know, the judicious few, and the precipitate many. According to the ideas of the latter, I must accept a challenge, or suffer an opprobrious name: but, as I never will knowingly lift my hand against the divine Harriet's husband, I therefore think it best to keep out of his way. I wish, if you have found out Mrs. Melmoth's place of residence, you would force some sums on the dear creature, destitute as she must be. Lady Lucy has been so obliging as to read some parts of Lord B.'s letters to her, with the story of that artful fury——woman I cannot call her.——You will not wonder that amazement should seize me at the horrid account: to Mrs. Melmoth am I, in effect, indebted for pre-
serving

erving me from the snares of that deluder.

Adieu, my dear Mulcester! My respectful compliments attend Lord Eastmain; and believe me at all times, in happiness or misery,

Your affectionate

BELGRAVE.

L E T T E R LXX.

Lord MULCESTER to Lady L. TEMPLE.

My dear Lucy,

I SEND this by a special messenger, that you may not be alarmed, as it is too probable that you may hear a report that Mr. Melmoth has circulated, who
is

is returned to England dressed in deep mourning, that his wife is dead: but Isabella says she is sure it is a falsehood, fabricated between him and his companions, to answer an obvious design. You will wonder, perhaps, how the miscreant dares to appear, after the misdemeanors he has been guilty of; but he early learned to discharge shame. He has sheltered himself in the verge of the court—his avowed errand to pay his duty to his worthy uncle.—What a pity the wretch is so nearly allied to him! But Lord Eastmain refuses to see him, as you may suppose, and begs no favour may be shewn him on his account.

I met his Lordship at Salisbury, and have the pleasure to tell you he is much better than he has been for some years past; and would be still more so, were it not for his vile nephew, and the sufferings of his beloved niece. Strange that
the

the dear creature cannot be heard of! Mr. Conway is returned, after using every method human reason could invent to explore her retreat, but without success. I am fearful (I must now speak my apprehensions, Lucy,) she is gone to the West-Indies, as a person answering her description embarked at Portsmouth with a lady about two months since for that torrid climate: and yet what acquaintance had she, with whom she would entrust herself? A young lady so little known as Mrs. Melmoth, and so naturally timid,—and not to write to one friend! Distress surely must have overpowered her. Lord Eastmain will have it, she has been once more in the power of Melmoth's emissaries, and is perhaps sent abroad by their means: on her account he has vouchsafed to send a message to the wretch her husband, promising him, if he will by Capt. Conway, the bearer of the message, discover (if in his knowledge) where

Mrs.

Mrs. Melmoth is, to allow him an annuity to subsist on in the South of France, to be increased as his behaviour may seem to deserve. He sent his Swiss servant with an answer to his Lordship, importing that his lady died at Granville, where she had gone in pursuit of Mr. Melmoth. The Swiss also confirmed it, and that his master was extremely affected at her death. This, as I said before, Isabella treats as a prelude to some concerted scheme. However, a messenger is sent to Granville, and then we shall form a better judgment.

Isabella, and her sister in iniquity, Spencer, will set out next week for Italy. As for poor Conway, what Isabella, who is as subtle as a serpent, conjectured was Conway's principal motive, is, I believe, true: he certainly loves, altho' without hope, Miss Del Rio; for which reason I shall, as soon as possible, get him an appointment

appointment to the East-Indies. Lord Eastmain has been very bountiful to him: so that he finds it is indeed true policy to be good. Poor Miss Del Rio! how much is that young lady to be pitied! but I hope the lenient hand of time, (which is the softener of sorrow, and pacifier of woe) as she is yet but young, will do much for her:—and yet I do not think Belgrave ought to remain under one roof with her. The poet says, that

“ —Time and absence you will find to

“ prove

“ A sure success for unsuccessful love.”

I am extremely concerned for Frederick's declining health; and yet I dare not wish him to come to England, lest Melmoth should challenge, or perhaps even get him assassinated. I wish you would persuade him to go to the Spa, and keep Lady Cosway some time with you.

VOL. II.

I

Do

Do not blush, my sister, to be under an obligation to Lord B——, as you think fit to term it. Human nature is not so bad a thing as some disgracers of their own species have imagined. We should not too soon, and without making proper applications, give up persons of ability upon conceptions of their general characters, and then, with the herd, set our faces against them, as if we knew them to be invincibly wicked. But I believe, my dear, you have the merit of reclaiming this now amiable nobleman, and fancy you are the only young woman of this flaunting age who can claim a penitent of her own making.

I am just now sent for to Lord Eastmain's, but will conclude on my return.

* * * * *

MORE surprising things, Lucy!——
Charles's wife has had the assurance to
come

come to England, and sent for Weston, our old butler, to be witness of her shame; thinking Charles would sue for a divorce, and then Melmoth could get some part of the returned fortune into his power. But Lord Eastmain has put him into a better method, an account of which is transmitted with this to the Earl and Countess. I dispatch the man in haste, lest the before-mentioned reports should reach your ears. Farewell for the present, and comfort yourself, as you would, in the like case,

Your affectionate friend and brother,

G. MULCESTER.

L E T T E R LXXI.

From the Same to the Same.

WELL, Lucy, you may now enjoy, if you are capable of such revenge, a triumph over both your infamous sister-in-law and Melmoth. When the messenger returned with my father's approbation, a Lord Chief-Justice's warrant was immediately got, and madam was brought home, sufficiently mortified, as you may suppose, on more occasions than one; for her aunt Harman was married to a young ensign, a boy about eighteen years of age, last week; and is gone with him to Liege. Charles behaved to her with great complaisance; and she, having now no other resource, was tolerably humble. As for her paramour, since all hopes of his gaining a part of this woman's fortune
are

are over, he has thrown himself into the rules of the King's-Bench; a proper companion for his brother-in-law; and is mean enough to alledge great part of his misfortunes to the charge of the woman he had helped to lead astray.—Oh! the conscience and honour of libertines!—But, to finish the story of these guilty creatures at once; for I suppose they are both shut up for life—Melmoth is now in a prison, where he will shorten his days by intemperance; and madam Temple, by a stratagem of Charles's, in a remote part in Wales, under the care of an old Welchman and his wife, whom their yearly salary will keep steady; and madam has neither money nor jewels to bribe with; nor has she any more clothes than such as are necessary for her; and her name and her faults seem to have died together. This is certainly the most prudent method that could be taken to punish her, as she is too wicked to be suffered to roam at

large; and Charles enjoys the fortune on which Melmoth had set his heart. The Marquis arrived yesterday. I sent for Lord B——, whom he had before seen in Paris; and his Lordship has promised to attend him to all places worth his notice, as I am so much engaged with Lord Eastmain: but I have insisted on the Marquis's making our house his principal place of residence. Conway took his leave yesterday, in order to follow his ship to Gravesend. Our joint interest has procured him a lucrative employment. The post waits: therefore I can only add, that I am

Your's,

G. MULCESTER.

LETTER

LETTER LXXII.

Lord MULCESTER to the Countess of
BELMONT.

IN what words, my dear and honoured parent, shall I communicate the heaviest tidings that (except the death of my dear father and yourself, or Lucy, or Belgrave,) could ever reach my ears? The sweet Harriet is no more. She died at Granville. The messenger returned last night.—Oh! my poor sister!—I can only depend on your tenderness, your prudence, to break it to her. Thus to be cut off in all the bloom of youth and beauty, a fallen blossom gathered as a trophy to perfidy and cruelty! Do not, Madam, let Lord Belgrave know this: I have a reason for it; or, at least, let my sister disclose it to him, when her own

forrow is a little moderated. Lord East-
 main does not know it yet: he went to
 Eastmain yesterday to receive the Marquis
 for a few days. Sir Charles, Lady Cos-
 way, and Miss Del Rio, sent their several
 compliments yesterday, to acquaint me
 with their arrival: but the woeful account
 from Granville deprived me of the power
 of waiting on them last night. I sent
 this morning but too weighty a reason
 for it. Lord B—— is gone to his estate
 in Gloucestershire; therefore I must go to
 Eastmain: or I would have sent for his
 Lordship to town; but then the Marquis
 would be left with strangers, and I would
 not quit town till I hear from you. I
 hope my Lucy's magnanimity will enable
 her to bear this shock. Prophetic were
 the words of the dear deceased in one of
 her letters to my sister, when she said
 something foreboded they should never
 meet again in this world. I am come to
 the resolution of requesting his Lordship
 to

to send Charles down to attend the Marquis.

A packet is just this moment brought from Lord Belgrave, dated from Montpelier, giving me an account of his sister's death: but, as this is an event which has been long expected, it cannot affect him like the loss of this incomparable woman to us—flower of the world! by the vilest of my sex laid low! why is this terrible task laid on me? why am I, whose heart is so unfitted for it, destined to be the communicator of such tidings? I sometimes with my sister were in England: she might be soothed by the frequent consolations of her particular intimates, Mrs. Vareny, &c. Yet where can she be so well as with her parents? under whose watchful eye she will, I trust, escape the fate of her much to be lamented friend.—Oh! Madam, how pregnant with woe is this deprivation! How many, many fatal

consequences may attend it! — Excuse, honoured Madam, my hasty conclusion. Lady Cosway is below, and impatient to see me: it is, I doubt, a confirmation of Mrs. Melmoth's decease. Every wish a dutiful heart can suggest, I beg you to present to his Lordship. On this occasion I know he will dispense with my writing to him. Very much depressed is the heart of

Your dutiful son,

and obedient servant,

GEORGE MULCESTER.

LETTER

L E T T E R LXXIII.

Lord MULCESTER to Lady L. TEMPLE.

MY dear, my beloved Friend and Sister! how quick, in this mutable state, are our transitions from joy to grief! or, I ought to say, from grief to joy! I think Pope, in his beautiful mock-heroic poem, says,

“ Oh! thoughtless mortals! ever blind

“ to fate!

“ Too soon dejected, and too soon elate!”

Charles arrived here last night with the inclosed letter from Lord B——. Prepare yourself for a surprize. Lord B—— is, I think, destined to be our comforter, and, like the heroes of romance, he must demand the damsel as the reward of his travels and fatigue.—

Lord Eastmain says, no Lord in England shall have you but himself; for Harriet and you must not be separated:—yes, my dear sister, Harriet and you must not be separated.—But take the subsequent account.

L E T T E R LXXIV.

Lord B—— to Lord MULCESTER.

I ONCE, my dear Lord Mulcester, I heard you observe, that Providence was pleased to make use of unworthy instruments in rewards or punishments. I am an unworthy instrument, the most unworthy of all creatures; yet (as if by way of reward for my sincere contrition) I not only have been the means of clearing Mrs. Melmoth from the vile aspersions, but

but have likewise discovered she is in being; which you shall know by the following relation. As soon as Lord Eastmain went to town on your summons, Lord Charles and the Marquis set out for Gloucestershire; but, on the way, Charles prevailed on him to call on Sir Alexander Nesbit, on the borders of our county. Sir Alexander is very hospitable, and loves convivial friends. The Marquis was pleased with his reception, and the beautiful situation of Nesbit wood; therefore they took up their residence with him for some days. But one morning the Marquis, being an early riser, attended only by his valet, sallied forth on horseback (very imprudent, you will say, when neither of them could speak English): they rode on till they came to the forest; where a deer rushing hastily from a thicket, the Marquis's horse took fright, and ran away with him. He kept his seat for some time; but, finding no hopes of the creature's

creature's stopping, he threw himself off, and thereby broke his leg and dislocated his shoul-
 der. In this condition he was carried by some poor haymakers to the next village, where there is a tolerable inn; and a man was dispatched to the next town, at four miles distance, for a surgeon. In the mean time the poor distressed Marquis, impatient of being amidst strangers, who could not understand one word of what he said, made signs for some person to write a letter, but in vain, till a neighbouring lady was so kind to come and converse some time with him, and by her means a note was dispatched to Mr. Temple, who immediately came away with Sir Alexander; for the servant was not then returned with the news. He was gone twenty miles another way, mistaking the road, in search of his master. Mr. Temple sent away post for me. I luckily was at home, and set out with the messenger. When I arrived,

rived, I found the surgeons had just set the fractures: they assured me the Marquis was in a fair way, if he were kept quiet. You know, Sir, Mr. Temple is not fond of solitude; therefore, as soon as he could with decency, he left the Marquis to my care; and then I had time to contemplate the melancholy contents of your packet to me to inform me of Mrs. Melmoth's death. In the midst of my grief on that account, the Marquis, finding himself much easier, and able to converse, told me how much he was obliged to the lady who so humanely came to him. In all his life, he said, he never saw a more beautiful creature, or one in whom such dignity and sweetness were mingled, whilst she spoke to him: but, when she heard the name of Temple, she trembled, turned pale, and went to the window; but, immediately recollecting herself, took a hasty leave, and said she would take care a note should be sent

to

to Sir Alexander's; which you know she punctually performed. A thousand pleasing hopes at once darted into my head. I had heard of fictitious births and deaths. Surely, said I, Lord Mulcester's messenger might be corrupted, or imposed on by a false tale: I will endeavour to find out who this lady is. I inquired of the people of the inn; of whom I learned, that the lady came thither about three months since, and took a small house in the village, where she set up a school, and was beloved by all the neighbours; that Madam Melville, a neighbouring gentlewoman, and lady of the manor, came to her seat for the summer season, and, in her visits to the village, called in at the school, and was so pleased with Mrs. Bladon, the school-mistress, that she had taken her to live with her ever since; that, when the Marquis came, they not understanding what he said, knew that Mrs. Bladon could "talk all *outlandish* languages,"

"languages," (the innkeeper's word);
 he had gone to her, who immediately
 came in Madam Melville's chariot. I
 new dressed myself, and sent to Sir Alex-
 ander's for his coach, and waited on
 Mrs. Melville; a fine, graceful lady,
 goodness and benignity painted in her
 face. I begged leave to see Mrs. Bladon.
 By the hesitating answer Mrs. Melville
 gave, I was encouraged to say, "Do not,
 "Madam, let Mrs. Melmoth secrete her-
 "self from me: I will pledge my life,
 "my honour, that no one shall know
 "the place of her retreat but her much-
 "loved friend Lady Lucy, who is now
 "sinking under violent grief at her sup-
 "posed death; a report which has been
 "industriously propagated, doubtless to
 "answer some bad purpose." A maid-
 servant at this time came running into the
 room, and said Mrs. Bladon had fainted
 away. This was a painful pleasure to
 me, as I was pretty well convinced my
 conjectures

conjectures were right; although I was sorry for the discomposure I had occasioned her. Mrs. Melville returned after a short time, and said, " You have indeed, Sir, discovered our secret; we will rely on your honour, and you shall have the pleasure, as you so earnestly desire it, to see Mrs. Melmoth to-morrow, when I shall be glad of your company to dine at Melville-Place." I thanked the beneficent lady; but would not defer, for one moment, acquainting you with what I know will rejoice your heart, as much as it has done that of

Your obliged friend and servant,

B——.

P. S. I hope to forward a packet equally as pleasing to-morrow evening.

LETTER

L E T T E R LXXV.

From the Same to the Same.

My dear Lord MULCESTER,

I HAVE now seen and conversed with the amiable Harriet. I was at first almost in doubt whether all that passed were reality or not, I was so overjoyed. The lovely woman received me with the sweetness that is inseparable from all her actions. Lovely she always must be; although she is much altered from what we have seen her. A fixed melancholy seems settled on her countenance, and no trace of the rose remains on her cheek: yet her amiable companion and protectress, Mrs. Melville, is continually soothing and cheering her. This Mrs. Melville is indeed a most admirable woman: I cannot better
give

give you her character, than in referring you to that of the *Man of Ross*, described by Mr. Pope. I told Mrs. Melmoth all that she must have been ignorant of during her being in the hands of those wretches. She begged Mrs. Melville might be present at the relation. How shocked were they both at the narrative of the vile Isabella! How thankful was Harriet for her almost miraculous escape from them! She was rejoiced to hear of Lord Eastmain's arrival; but dropped a tear, and said she was afraid he would not again look on her with an eye of regard. I told her, his Lordship was almost distracted at her loss, and would give any reward to find her.

" Oh! how I have been deceived, Lord

" B——! (said she, lifting up her eyes)

" What vile hands have I been in! and

" deluded by blacker hearts of my own

" sex, than I thought there could be in

" the world! But I will write a circum-

" stantial account to Lady Lucy, which

" I will

“ I will send under cover, unsealed, to
 “ Lord Mulcester: and then, Sir, as you
 “ have so generously interested yourself
 “ in my behalf, you may read it, if you
 “ think proper.”

Mrs. Melville expressly stipulated, that, if Lord Eastmain came down to see his niece, he should by no means carry her from Melville-Place: first, as it was where Mr. Melmoth could never suspect her residence; and, secondly, she said she was so selfish, she could not bear the thoughts of parting with her guest. Mrs. Melmoth begs her kindest respects to you, and leaves it to you to break this matter to her uncle as your prudence directs.—Thus ended this agreeable visit. I am to drink tea with the ladies to-morrow. The Marquis is much better, and begs his respects.

I am, Sir, unalterably your's,

B——;

LETTER

LETTER LXXVI.

Mrs. MELMOTH to Lady LUCY TEMPLE.

My dearest Lucy,

AM I once more permitted to write to you? Am I once more deemed innocent by the friend of my soul? Surely I have been in a frightful dream, and am but just now awakened from it! Oh! my Lucy, you know not what I have suffered since I wrote to you last; and yet, I believe I may say, “ it is good for me that I have been afflicted;” for calamities sometimes are not to be distinguished from blessings. Oh! what trouble have I given my friends by my imprudent conduct in listening to that artful woman, Mrs. Mountney! Except you knew her, you do not know half her fascinating powers,

powers. I will give you as circumstantial an account of what befel me after I escaped from Newbury, as I can: as to what happened before, Mr. Conway's and the vile woman's narratives will best explain it; for to this hour I am ignorant of some of the arts made use of to deceive me. The women, and the Duke de R—, behaved with decency to me, to be sure; but, had I had the least suspicion, I might have seen it was a behaviour that was put on by constraint, as the time was not come for them to avow their wicked designs. But this I must tell you; I never heard Lord Mulcester had been there: I should have rejoiced to see him. I wrote letter after letter to his Lordship, to you, to my uncle, to Mrs. Varenny; but could obtain no answer; till at length came the cruel, forged letter. I inclose it, that you may see how exactly your hand was copied. I took to my bed on receipt of it, and continued ill for some weeks;
and,

and, when I had gained a little strength, I was given to understand that all my friends had renounced me, and Lord Eastmain in particular. Tears and silent anguish were now all my relief—Afraid of being subject again to Mr. Melmoth's violence—afraid of the Duke de R——, who by this time began to address me with the gallantry natural to his country. But, when Mr. Conway told me the certainty of evil, no wonder I fled with him to a place of safety; where he left me—my whole effects contained in a pocket handkerchief. From Basingstoke I went to Salisbury, where I sold my watch; and from thence crossed the country, thinking to go to a village in Worcestershire, where Jenny's mother lived: but, happening to come to a town where a troop of soldiers were passing, and on the same route, and the officers being rather impertinent to me, seeing me alone, I altered my mind, and quitted the great road; and, after
several

several cross stages, came to the village where Lord B—— so providentially found me. I ought to have told you, I bought a coarse linen gown and stuff petticoat at Salisbury, and quite metamorphosed myself into a country girl. And here, my dear, let me make good my assertion, that some calamities are not to be distinguished from blessings: for, when all human comforts failed,—when I thought myself an outcast of mankind,—then did all-cheering hope extend its friendly hand in the person of Mrs. Melville. Oh! my Lucy, how you will love this excellent woman when you see her! Kindred minds, like your's, will soon mingle. She longs to see my dearest friend; the friend of my tender years. Oh! my love, what a painful pleasure does your sweet solicitude for my welfare give me! How am I distressed on all sides with gratitude! How shall I reward Lord B——! I cannot; but I hope my friend will, as he

seems so earnest to deserve it. I have received kind letters from Mrs. Varenny and Lady S——, and expect Lord Eastmain and your brother to-morrow.

Adieu, my dearest, kindest Lucy! the friend ever nearest and dearest to my fond heart!

Your equally obliged, and faithful,

HARRIET.

L E T T E R LXXVII.

Lady L. TEMPLE to Lord MULCESTER.

YOUR welcome packets followed so fast on one another, that I have had no time for regular answers: nor indeed could I write regularly; for I am all joy and

and gladness. What an association of clever things has happened together! In the first place, the Marquis broke his leg: a clever thing it has proved in its consequences; for by that means my Harriet was found; and who would mind a few broken bones on such an occasion? I should not; and the Marquis, to be sure, is too gallant to repine. And, secondly, my ladyship has found the use of her speech; for I have been silent almost these six weeks—

But now I prate away
Both night and day.—

I hope you will allow that my poor tongue is most dreadfully in arrear. But what do you think is the third clever thing? I am permitted to come to England, with the Prince and Princess of D——, who want to see our land of liberty and roast beef; and as soon as their

suite is ready, away we come. — But, George, this last piece of cleverness is at your expence; for I have been guarantee for your being ransom for me. Take Charles in your hand to attend the Earl and Countess, to make amends for the loss of Lucy. But, levity apart, our honoured parents wish to see you, as is natural; for long have they been deprived of the presence of so inestimable a son; and they wish, if Charles will be ruled, to have him for some time under their care.

Forward the inclosed to my dear run-away. — My compliments to the Marquis, Lord B——, and whom you approve. — Tell Lord Eastmain I long to see him, and congratulate him on his health restored. — I intend to offer myself as a candidate to be Lady Eastmain.

Adieu,

(197)

Adieu, my brother! I shall expect to see you almost as soon as I see the white cliffs of Albion.

LUCY TEMPLE.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Lord MULCASTER to Lord BELGRAVE.

My dear Lord BELGRAVE,

I AM much obliged to you for your kind solicitude for mine and my friends' welfare: I include all you ask after in that number. I have now a packet of wonders to transmit; but I will set them down as they happened. Lord Eastmain and myself were preparing for Melville-Place, the carriage at the door; when a physician of eminence waited on

his Lordship, and told him Mr. Melmoth was in a very dangerous way; therefore, if his Lordship proposed to shew him any favour, now was the time. A very penitential letter had been received from Mr. Melmoth some days before: but as Lord Eastmain attributed it to his usual *finesse*, and supposed it was only calculated to answer some pecuniary purpose, therefore he did not notice it, till this worthy physician gave such a favourable account of his behaviour——“ He seems to be
 “ penitent, Lord Mulcester; and it is not
 “ for me to judge beyond appearances:
 “ if you will condescend to accompany
 “ me, we will postpone our journey to
 “ Melville-Place till to-morrow, and at-
 “ tend the good Doctor to St. George’s
 “ fields,” (said this humane uncle.)

To the poor emaciated penitent we went: but such a sight would have penetrated the hardest heart.

Poor

Poor Melmoth ! what a spiritless figure does he make ! I remember you once said, that it was more difficult for a man to behave well in prosperity than in adversity : but the man who will prove the observation to be true, must not be one who, by his own extravagance or vice, has reduced himself, from an affluence to which he was born, to penury ; at least, to a state of obligation and dependence. — But let me forbear reflections on this dying libertine. Lord Eastmain would have had him removed to Hanover-square ; but his physician advised to the contrary. He earnestly desired to see Mrs. Melmoth, and called her injured angel : if she would only once see him, and soothe his gloomy passage with her forgiveness, he said, it was all he desired in this world. Lord Eastmain told him, Mrs. Melmoth was safe, and well as her afflictions would admit of. “ Thank
 “ Heaven (said he, raising himself in the
 K 4 “ bed)

“ bed) that she is! Oh! that I could see
 “ her! I cannot expect favour from her;
 “ and yet I would owe her forgiving
 “ only to her own heart. Do not try to
 “ influence her, my Lord; leave it to
 “ herself. Merciful and good as she is
 “ to all, sure in this tremendous moment
 “ she will look with some degree of pity
 “ on me.” His Lordship wrote to Mrs.
 Melmoth last night: if she chooses to
 come, his post-chariot and proper attend-
 ants, myself for one, will meet her at
 Cirencester. I called on Mr. Melmoth
 this morning. “ Oh! Lord Mulcester,
 “ (said he, with tears in his eyes) I would
 “ give millions of worlds, had I them to
 “ dispose of, that my conscience was clear
 “ as your’s. See the end of my libertine
 “ pursuits! See the fate of my compa-
 “ nions in iniquity!”—He then gave
 me the following letter from Sir James
 Hazzeldine.

LETTER

LETTER LXXIX.

Sir JAMES HAZZELDINE to Mr.
MELMOTH.

A FINE hand have we made of it, Melmoth!—You will receive this from the hand of wretchedness. I was last week arrested at the suit of L—— the banker at Paris; and altho' I have wrote to Ashton and Greaves, neither of them will advance a single *sous*; and yet these men we called friends. To complete all, not one single guinea to try my luck, even were I at liberty; and that ungrateful hussy, Sir Marmaduke Cosway's wife, has spirited up her husband to refuse a draught I sent to him, and, truly, wrote me word she was not in the least obliged to me, as my design in her marriage was to serve myself. I again repeat, What a miserable situation are we

in! There is more bad news: the ship in which Isabella and Nancy embarked for Civita Vecchia, is cast away, and every soul on board perished. Poor Bell, I must do her the justice to say, was she in being, would in this distress do something to relieve me: but she is gone, where, I am apprehensive, we shall shortly follow.

All my hope is, that your uncle will once more receive you into favour; and then I make no doubt but you will be more generous and just to

Your friend and companion,

J. HAZZELDINE.



P. S. I leave you to make your own reflections on this unfeeling scrawl. He is more insensible and hardened than Melmoth. Poor undone Sir James! where is
now

now his pride of ancestry? Oh! these free livers! May you and I, my dear Belgrave, profit by those dreadful examples! I will not close this till an answer is returned from Mrs. Melmoth.



In Continuation.

Tuesday Night, Twelve o'Clock.

MRS. MELMOTH is this moment arrived, dear, amiable woman! her beneficent protectress with her. Talk not of men—here are two heroic women, at this season of the year, to travel, at a moment's warning, night and day, to attend the calls of humanity. Mrs. Melville is almost an angel. I cannot describe the meeting between the good old Peer and his niece. With her usual prudence, she stopped at Knightsbridge, and sent Jerry to acquaint me. He not finding me at

K 6

home,

home, came to Lord Eastmain's. His Lordship was with me at picquet.—

“What is the matter? (said he :) Is the

“poor profligate gone?” “No, my

“Lord; but his better angel is come.”

“Come! it is impossible.” “She is

“indeed.” “Where is she?” “At

“Knightsbridge.” “I fly to attend

“her.” When I presented her to him,

how the tears trickled down his aged

cheeks! — But I must throw a veil over a

scene, which I can scarcely describe. To-

morrow I will be more particular.



WELL, my dear Belgrave, Mrs. Melmoth has seen her husband, after proper precautions to inform him of her arrival in town. She entered his chamber with such an air of benignity in her face, as some heavenly minister would wear, who brought a message of peace: He looked
up

up to her, saying, " My Harriet! is it
" you, or a blessed spirit sent down to
" comfort me?"——What answer she
made, I know not; for she immediately
approached the bed, and is determined,
notwithstanding the remonstrances of Lord
Eastmain, to continue with him. Her
faithful Jenny is to attend her this evening.
Mrs. Melville has honoured Hanover-
square with her residence till she knows
how her fair friend is to be disposed of.
I will dispatch this, and forward another
as soon as possible. Adieu! I am

For ever your's,

MULCESTER.

LETTER

LETTER LXXX.

From the Same to the Same.

Dear Lord BELGRAVE,

Congratulate me! My Lucy arrived last night. Harriet came to her this morning; for Lucy would not see Mr. Melmoth. She said, it would be an insult to him, as she had so openly avowed her dislike to him. How tender, how fervent is the friendship of those admirable women! Mrs. Melville is charmed with my sister. A lovely, haughty creature she is! Haughty I call her on Lord B—'s account: he certainly is now deserving of her; yet the capricious girl received his first devoirs with—"Sir, I am much obliged to you: but you have done yourself honour; all the world ought
" to

“ to serve my Harriet.”—How much does Lord B— adore her! I hope she will make him happy; for, notwithstanding her airs, she certainly has a *tendre* for him.

Poor Mr. Melmoth is much worse: his physicians (for he has now two) pronounce that he will not be many days on this side of the grave. I waited on him this morning, when I went to acquaint Mrs. Melmoth of her friend's arrival. With what energy did the poor unhappy man express himself! “ Oh! my Lord
 “ Mulcester, (said he) with horror do I
 “ recollect those hours of vanity which
 “ I have wasted. Oh! return, ye long-
 “ neglected moments! Oh! what tongue
 “ can utter the anguish of a soul sus-
 “ pended between the extremes of infinite
 “ joy or eternal misery! I never awaked
 “ till now. I have but just conceived a
 “ proper idea of the dignity of a rational
 “ being.

“ being. Oh! Lord Mulcester, pray for
 “ me!” His lovely wife (what a sweet
 comforter!) conceals her inward anguish,
 and, indeed, endeavours to soothe his
 passage. — Frederick! my heart is torn.
 What a strange fatality! I cannot have
 you near me at present: it must not be.
 I would say more; but why should I
 search into futurity?

Lady S—— is now with my sister,
 pleading her brother's cause, I suppose.
 That she may be a successful advocate, is
 the wish of

Your

G. MULCESTER.

P. S. I shall proceed, as occasion offers,
 before Lord R—— sends his dispatches.

LETTER

L E T T E R LXXXI.

Lady LUCY TEMPLE to Lord BELGRAVE.

I AM commissioned, my Lord, by our beloved George, to inform you, that Mr. Melmoth has now resigned all his frailties with his breath; and before this his remains will be placed in the tomb of his ancestors: an event not deplored by me, I can assure you; although Harriet is very solemn on the occasion. Not that I can accuse her of hypocrisy: she does not affect a false sorrow—she is pained to see cut off in the prime of life, by his own excesses, the man whose name she bears. But what would some handsome women give to have an opportunity of thus shining through their weeds? Forgive this rambling, my Lord, on this occasion: my brother being so much taken

taken up with the sorrowful uncle and niece, deposes me his amanuensis.

But the chief purport of this letter is, to beg you will make it as convenient to yourself as possible to meet George at V—— by April. I will not allow you to come to England at this juncture; nay, you shall not come whilst we are in our sable *miserables*: but, when the blazing joyfals come into fashion, I will be amongst the first to request your delectable company. I greatly want a champion at present; for I am besieged, like a frontier town, by a whole band, on Lord B——'s account: George is at the head of them. Appeals have been sent to the Earl and Countess. The things urged against me are, his generosity, his family connexions, his undoubted reformation, and, above all, the proof he gave of it in being so zealous in my Harriet's cause. What say you, my Lord? But I doubt, on second recollection,

recollection, I have made a wrong application; for the last reason will rather incline you to take the part of the allies, than to yield me any succours.

Ah! "Where shall Celia fly for shelter?"

If I should be forced to capitulate! — Yet, no, it must not be. — But here comes the tormentor, and his sister Lady S——. I do love her. I must attend them: therefore, for the present, I shall conclude, and am, with unalterable wishes for your welfare,

LUCY TEMPLE.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXII.

Lord MULCESTER to Lord BELGRAVE.

My dear Lord BELGRAVE,

TO-MORROW will your much-honoured friend set out on his way to V——, but first sits down to inform you, that he resigned Lucy to Lord B—'s care yesterday; and can say from my heart, what I once thought I never could, that I rejoice in calling him brother. I doubt not but Lucy's virtues will secure his reformation, and her conquest. About two hours since, Lord Eastmain, Mrs. Melville, and Mrs. Melmoth, with the bride and bridegroom, set out for Melville-Place. The whole amiable party join in their best regards to you. Mr. and Mrs. Varenny propose being at the Spa, when the season permits. I hope to prevail on
them

them to pay a visit to V——, which I know will give pleasure to all their friends there. Adieu, my dear Frederick! I need not ask you to continue to me your affectionate regards, since you know that I am

Unalterably your's,

MULCESTER.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Lady B—— to Lord MULCESTER.

Melville-Place.

My dear GEORGE,

THE best wishes of our *belle assemblée* attend the Earl, the Countess, the amiable Belgrave, and yourself. We are as happy as mortals can be; some of whom have

have the enjoyment of their wishes, but others remain hopeless:—a paradox, you will say; but true; for yesterday came hither that emblem of a weeping willow, poor Miss Del Rio,—

“ Now drooping, woeful, wan, like one
“ forlorn,

“ Or craz’d with care, or cross’d in hope—
“ less love.”

Poor girl! I cannot bear that the men should have such a triumph to boast of. But, for the honour of your sex, I will acknowledge that I believe only two or three of the worthiest of them are acquainted with the woeful secret. Her errand here was to consult Lord B—— on the important article of making a will. She says, if she can do this while yet under age, the major part of her fortune is to be bequeathed to Mrs. Melmoth; for that, she says, will be only giving it
in

in trust for Lord Belgrave, as she is sure, now Harriet is free, that she will be united to his Lordship: “ For where (said she) “ can her beauty and sweetness find so “ amiable a counterpart?” (tears at the same time flowing from her languid eyes.)

Where could the dear, romantic creature get so much penetration? But how sharp-sighted is a woman in love! The result of all is, that she is going to retire to a convent, and there lament her hapless flame. When she is settled in her choice of what I call a living tomb, she is to take leave of Lord Belgrave in a pathetic epistle, and to write another to Harriet to persuade her to accept the amiable fellow’s vows. “ Surely, Lady B——, “ (she added) this will expiate my girlish “ indiscretion with Sir James. If I know “ my own heart, I have more pleasure in “ contributing to their happiness, than I “ possibly should have had in the enjoy-
“ ment

"ment of my own wishes." - Enlarged sentiments these are of the lovely heroine: but I am apt to think, when I attempt to take a peep into futurity, that this effort of generosity is only the effect of a suddenly raised imagination, which will subside, the nature of the case considered, when she comes to cool reflection. Be it as it may, my Lord proposes to accompany her to town next week, and take counsel's opinion about the disposal of her fortune. Lady Cosway and Sir Charles approve of the nunnery scheme; but the money bequests will be a bitter pill. In writing to one, I write to all at V——: so that I need only add, that I am, as usual,

Your affectionate sister,

Lucy B——.

LETTER

L E T T E R LXXXIV.

Lord BELGRAVE to Lady B——.

My much-esteemed Lady B——,

IN what words shall a man who is fluctuating between the extremes of hope and despair address you? Yet, let me hope, surely there can be no impropriety now in my returning to my native country, nor in throwing myself at the feet of the amiable Harriet. Oh! Lady B——, one encouraging line from your pen!—let the exile return with hope.—But the die by this time is surely cast. I have written to the mistress of my fate, and Lord Eastmain. Propitious be their answers! In such a situation I can only say, Be the advocate of the faithful

BELGRAVE.

L E T T E R LXXXV.

Lady B—— to Lord MULCESTER.

Berkley-square.

LAST night arrived one of the most amiable of men, and most delicate of lovers—Need I say, Lord Belgrave? My good Lord is all raptures on the occasion. We are on the wing for Eastmain. I shall dispatch this from thence when the turtles have met.

* * * * *

Eastmain, Tuesday morning.

AH! George, all disappointed at last!

“What odd, fantastic things we women
“do!

“Who would not listen, when young
“lovers woo?”

Yes,

Yes, Harriet, the perverse Harriet, has refused Lord Belgrave.—Who could have thought of such a thing? But such cogent reasons has she given!—When he was first introduced, some fluttering and trembling succeeded: no bad sign, I thought, for Belgrave. But, when we retired to the drawing-room after dinner, how much were we surprised to see her take out Lord Belgrave's letter, and, waving her hand in the most graceful manner, commanded our attention: “ My good Lord
 “ Belgrave, (said she) here are none but
 “ friends present; friends to whom I am
 “ under the greatest obligations.—Your
 “ Lordship in this letter does the poor
 “ Harriet the highest honour. I am not
 “ insensible to your merit, best and wor-
 “ thiest of men! and, were I to give way
 “ to inclination; you would I choose from
 “ all mankind. But there is an everlasting
 “ barrier between us: Shall the poor,
 “ contemned Mrs. Melmoth be Countess

“ of Belgrave? Would not the world,
 “ in such a case, have a triumph? How
 “ will it confirm every invidious slander?
 “ Will the censorious not say, Melmoth
 “ was not so much to blame as was ima-
 “ gined, and such-like reflections? Re-
 “ member, my Lord, Cæsar’s maxim;
 “ his wife was not even to be suspected.
 “ Sincerely do I believe that you esteem,
 “ that you love the hapless Harriet.—
 “ But, my Lord, seek out one against
 “ whom there are none of the objections,
 “ which in this case you must confess to
 “ be unanswerable. I shall rejoice to
 “ hear of your happiness: but I can only
 “ be your friend, and wear you in my
 “ heart. While I draw the vital breath,
 “ will you be remembered with esteem
 “ by her who now must tear herself from
 “ you for ever. But be assured (added
 “ she, offering her sweet hand to him)
 “ that we must never meet again on this
 “ side of eternity.”

Here

Here Mrs. Melmoth ceased, and withdrew; leaving Belgrave, and the whole company, in silent astonishment, following her with their eyes, condemning, and yet admiring her. Poor Lord Belgrave! all efforts have been used, but to no purpose. She is fixed as fate, and has declared, if any further importunities are used with her, she will retire from all our knowledge. I never saw a person so steady in their resolution. In the bloom of youth, to give up the man whom she doated on, from a point of delicacy, and yet, let me say, a just one—is not this the test of virtue, and the practiser of it? My dearest friend! how much do I adore her, although she has disappointed my most sanguine hopes! Oh! George, the disconsolate Belgrave is now preparing for London, like Adam forced to forego his Eden. Adieu, George! My heart is full.

LUCY B——.

L E T T E R LXXXVI.

Lord BELGRAVE to Lord MULCESTER.

OH! my George, your worthy sister has prepared you to receive a banished man.—To be refused by the woman of my heart, and yet admire her the more for the refusal!—Meet the poor exile at Liege. But what avail all my endeavours to preserve a useless life? To me the future round of days and years are useless all. Adieu! Your friendship will be now the only consolation of the remaining life of

BELGRAVE.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R LXXXVII.

Lord MULCESTER to Lord BELGRAVE.

YES, my dear Lord Belgrave, I have been informed of all by Lucy.—What shall I say to comfort my friend?—To expatiate on the excellence, the prudence of Mrs. Melmoth, would be but poor consolation. However, it may be proper to inform you, that by my sister's last packet I find that, your last visit to that lady having given occasion to the talkers to blaze abroad an account that a treaty of marriage was concluded between you, the lovely, injured Harriet was traduced in all companies on this account. This, like the rest of her sufferings, she bore with a saint-like patience, till, your departure being known, the report was contradicted.—“ It is well, “ (said

“ (said she then, lifting her fine eyes to
 “ heaven) this is the last of my trials.—
 “ Amiable youth! — the world no more
 “ shall persecute us: for we must now
 “ remain, and it is fit we should, where
 “ mountains, seas, and deserts must di-
 “ vide us.”

The pearly drop stood in her eyes while
 she spoke thus — “ Forgive my weakness,
 “ (said she) but this is the last tribute
 “ I shall pay to the memory of my de-
 “ parted happiness.” — Lucy said more:
 but, as this is the sum of all, here I
 stop. — I shall only add, that Lord East-
 main, who has settled all his estate upon
 his amiable niece, has made her a present
 of a little rural retreat, about ten miles
 distant from Eastmain; whither she is
 gone, accompanied by Miss Del Rio,
 who is to remain there till she can place
 herself in a convent. — Lord B——, my
 sister, and Mrs. Vareny, are all those in
 England,

England, that she will permit to write to, or visit her. She added, however, that she should be glad to hear from me, and that, from any other hand than your own, she should be happy to hear of your welfare.

Having thus given you all the satisfaction in my power, let me conjure you, my friend, to summon all your philosophy to your aid; nor, while yet in the bloom of youth, to refuse wilfully those innocent pleasures, which the Supreme Being has interspersed through the scenes of life to make our journey agreeable. Remember that, as a finite being, you ought to be resigned to the will of Heaven. Remember that, as a man, you ought not to be excelled by a woman, though the most amiable of her sex, in fortitude. And, finally, remember that you ought to preserve your life, because it is the gift of
the

the Creator, and the continuance of it is
of the utmost consequence to all your
friends, and to none more than to

Your most affectionate

G. MULCASTER.

THE END.

